

BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF SOUTH CAROLINA

[Greenville, South Carolina]

HEARING # 19-10762

MARCH 14, 2019

6:00 P.M.

DOCKET NO. 2018-319-E:

Duke Energy Carolinas, LLC - Application for Adjustments in
Electric Rate Schedules and Tariffs, and Request for an Accounting
Order

TRANSCRIPT OF TESTIMONY
AND PROCEEDINGS

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HEARING BEFORE: Comer H. 'Randy' RANDALL, *Chairman*; Justin
T. WILLIAMS, *Vice Chairman*; and COMMISSIONERS John E.
'Butch' HOWARD, Florence P. BELSER, Thomas J. 'Tom' ERVIN,
Swain E. WHITFIELD, and O'Neal HAMILTON

ADVISOR TO COMMISSION: B. Randall Dong, Esq.

STAFF: Jerisha Dukes, Esq., Commissioners' Staff; William O.
Richardson, Technical Advisory Staff; Afton Ellison and Rob
Bockman, Clerk's Staff; Patricia Stephens, Project Management
Staff; Jo Elizabeth M. Wheat, CVR-CM/M-GNSC, Court Reporter

APPEARANCES:

HEATHER S. SMITH, ESQUIRE, representing DUKE
ENERGY CAROLINAS, LLC, APPLICANT

JEFFREY M. NELSON, ESQUIRE, representing the
SOUTH CAROLINA OFFICE OF REGULATORY STAFF

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF SOUTH CAROLINA

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P R O C E E D I N G S

CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome. Welcome to tonight's public hearing for the Duke Energy rate case. We're glad to have everyone here tonight. This is your night to say what you want to say in front of the Public Service Commission, here, and we're going to – first of all, we've got a special guest tonight. We've got Senator Karl Allen here. We want to give him a chance to say a few words.

SEN. ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, it is my pleasure, on behalf of the residents of Greenville County and surrounding upstate to welcome the Public Service Commission to Greenville. You are in my district, Senate District 7, in Greenville County, which we all know is the best district.

[Applause]

And we are pleased to have the turnout that we have, to show the importance of this issue.

And so, with that, I will certainly be quiet – and will try to ease into a seat down there, somewhere, but will certainly be quiet.

And thank you for coming to listen to the people here in Greenville, where they did not have

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1 come to Columbia to be heard. Thank you, Mr.
2 Chairman, and members of the Public Service
3 Commission. Welcome.

4 Thank you, people of Greenville County and
5 surroundings, for coming and getting your views
6 heard.

7 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you, Senator.

8 Are there any other elected officials here
9 that we – anybody from the General Assembly that we
10 have not recognized?

11 [No response]

12 Okay. All right. I want to – before we
13 start, I want you to – I want to introduce the
14 members of the Public Service Commission that are
15 here tonight. To my far right, Vice Chairman
16 Justin Williams, from District 6; Commissioner Tom
17 Ervin, from District 4; Commissioner Swain
18 Whitfield, from District 5. On my far left,
19 Commissioner Butch Howard, from District 1;
20 Commissioner O'Neal Hamilton, from District 7;
21 Commissioner Florence Belser, from District 2. And
22 my name is Randy Randall, and I represent District
23 3.

24 At this time, we'll take appearances from the
25 parties, from Duke and from the Office of

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1 Regulatory Staff.

2 MS. SMITH: Can you hear me, Mr. Chairman?

3 Good evening, Mr. Chairman, and members of the
4 Commission. My name is Heather Shirley Smith. I'm
5 counsel for Duke Energy Carolinas. I appreciate
6 you allowing us to be here tonight.

7 I would like to point out for the benefit of
8 the Commission and other folks here this evening
9 that we have our State President, Kodwo Gharthey-
10 Tagoe, here in attendance, to make sure we are
11 listening to everything that's said. We also have
12 an entire team of Duke folks here, in case there
13 are any customer-specific concerns that need to be
14 addressed, such as billing or outages, those kinds
15 of things.

16 I'd like to point out our Director of
17 Regulatory Affairs. His name is Marcus Preston –
18 he's in the white shirt over there – and he might
19 be of assistance as issues arise through the
20 evening.

21 MR. PRESTON: [Indicating.]

22 MS. SMITH: And just, once again, we very much
23 appreciate being here.

24 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you.

25 MR. NELSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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1 I'm Jeff Nelson, and I'm an attorney with the
2 State Office of Regulatory Staff. Thank y'all very
3 much for coming out. We've had really good crowds
4 so far, and this – it's really remarkable, and I
5 thank everybody for taking the time to come out and
6 voice their concerns tonight.

7 Our job, at the Office of Regulatory Staff, is
8 to represent the public interest in all these
9 cases. Anything involving rates with regulated
10 utilities in the State, that's what we do. So,
11 we're supposed to be, at least in part, your voice
12 in these proceedings.

13 I've got several people here with me tonight,
14 in addition to myself. I have people in the back
15 of the room: Dawn Hipp, who is our Chief Operating
16 Officer.

17 **MS. HIPP:** [Indicating.]

18 **MR. NELSON:** I have Ron Aiken, from our
19 External Communications Office.

20 **MR. AIKEN:** [Indicating.]

21 **MR. NELSON:** I have Roger Thompson over here,
22 who is our Utilities & Rates supervisor.

23 **MR. THOMPSON:** [Indicating.]

24 **MR. NELSON:** I also have – we have two people
25 outside you might have seen when you came in. If

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1 you looked way down towards the end of the hallway
2 right out outside here, there's a big American
3 flag. We've got a table set up back there, and
4 I've got two people sitting at that table back
5 there that can help you. Brad Kirby is one of
6 them, and Takisha Waller is the other one; they are
7 in our Consumer Services Division. So what they
8 typically do – we have an office that does nothing
9 but answer questions, problems that people have
10 with utilities. So they're experienced and they
11 know how to contact utilities and help you get
12 questions regarding billing, any kind of service
13 problems – please come and talk to us. You're
14 welcome to do that anytime during the hearing, or
15 if you want to wait until after the hearing, we
16 stick around until every last person leaves here.
17 So if you want to stay and talk to me, if you want
18 to talk to Ms. Hipp or somebody else, just hang
19 around afterwards and we will stay here until
20 everybody's had a chance to talk to us.

21 We are a separate-and-apart agency from the
22 Public Service Commission, too. Like I said, we
23 represent you. This Commission sits as an
24 independent body. They are what we call a quasi-
25 judicial body, and that means their positions are

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1 like that of judges in the State. In that
2 position, that means that you can't ask them
3 questions. You can ask us questions, and that's
4 why we're here, so we can talk to you. But just
5 like you can't ask the judge – if you were
6 testifying in a criminal case, you couldn't ask the
7 judge what his opinion was of something, you can't
8 ask questions of the Commissioners. So don't be
9 insulted if you ask something and they don't
10 answer. They're not allowed to answer, because of
11 the Rules of Judicial Conduct. Okay?

12 Like I said anybody who needs to talk about
13 anything, please let us know, and we'll stick
14 around and we'll talk to you. Thank you.

15 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you, Mr. Nelson.
16 Okay, now I'm going to turn it over to our Hearing
17 Officer, Mr. Randall Dong, to go over a few things
18 before we start.

19 **MR. DONG:** Good evening. As the Chairman has
20 said, my name is Randall Dong; I'm a lawyer with
21 the Public Service Commission and I help advise the
22 Commissioners. And I just have a couple of quick
23 housekeeping matters.

24 First of all, if you all would, please make
25 sure that your telephones are either off or

1 silenced. We'd rather not have the proceedings
2 interrupted.

3 Secondly, I'd like to keep this thing moving.
4 I know that we have a lot of people here; we want
5 to hear from as many of you as we can. Everyone
6 who wishes to speak, we want to give you that
7 opportunity. And because of that, we have
8 instituted a time limit on speakers, so we would
9 hold you to a three-minute time limit, please, with
10 each witness. That way, we can hear from more
11 people.

12 Furthermore, I'd like to try to keep three
13 people kind of on-deck, so to speak. I'm going to
14 try to keep a line of three people available so
15 that we continue to move things along.

16 I do want to tell you that the hearing in this
17 case is going to be held in Columbia beginning on
18 March 21st. That's next Thursday, and it will
19 continue until the hearing is over. The decision
20 in this case will be issued in May. So all that
21 being said, I'd like to go ahead and ask – well,
22 let me turn this back over to the Chairman for a
23 moment.

24 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you, Mr. Dong.

25 One of the things we – we're so glad to have

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1 so many people here tonight, and I want to make
2 sure that we get everyone heard that's here
3 tonight. So there's a few things I just wanted to
4 say, based on experience from the nights before.

5 When you come up to the microphone, please,
6 first thing is state your name and address, so that
7 our court reporter, Ms. Jo Wheat, can understand
8 you. Because everything – she's saying –
9 everything that you say, she's saying into that
10 little machine and it goes on the record. We've
11 got – with the three-minute limit, we've got a
12 clock right down here by Mr. Bill Richardson that
13 you'll be able to see, and there will be a bell
14 that goes – or, a buzzer that goes off at three
15 minutes, if you get that far. I know we've had
16 people reading, trying to read a long letter, that
17 type of thing. So I want to just ask you to please
18 be respectful of everybody's time that's coming
19 behind you, and when your three minutes is up,
20 stop. If there's something that you've got that we
21 can see that you can leave with us, we'll make sure
22 it gets put into the record as an exhibit, and
23 we'll have a record of that with us.

24 The other thing, with these three minutes, we
25 had people last night in Anderson ask the crowd

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1 "Please don't clap or cheer during my talk, because
2 I've only got three minutes." If you get loud and
3 the court reporter can't hear you, it cuts out
4 their time, because we've got to keep moving,
5 because we've got a lot of folks that want to talk,
6 and we certainly want to hear everyone.

7 And if someone has already said what you
8 wanted to say and you want to adopt their
9 testimony, it will go into the record just as if
10 you said it, too. So you can say that, that "I
11 agree with the person that went in front of me,"
12 and you don't have to say a lot if you don't want
13 to.

14 One last thing, just to re-remind, is that the
15 Judicial Code prevents us from answering questions,
16 so, but Mr. Nelson and his staff can answer
17 questions. The Duke folks all – they have a lot of
18 folks, with Mr. Preston back here, who can answer
19 questions. So if you have questions, they would be
20 folks to address it, and we appreciate you
21 cooperating with that.

22 With that said, I want to turn it back over to
23 Mr. Dong to start calling witnesses.

24 **MR. DONG:** Okay. The first three witnesses I
25 have on my list are: Dianne Bryant, James Hill,

1 Jr., and Robert Arden.

2 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** If you folks will come up?

3 One other thing I wanted to ask or remind
4 everyone, after you've been sworn in. When you
5 finish your three minutes, if you would please
6 remain at the microphone, I'm going to ask the
7 parties if they have questions or if the
8 Commissioners have questions for you, and then you
9 can leave after that. We want to make sure we hear
10 everything.

11 [Witness affirmed]

12 THEREUPON came,

13 **D I A N N E B R Y A N T ,**

14 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

15 **WITNESS:** I'm Dianne Bryant, 36 Faris Circle,
16 Greenville, South Carolina.

17 I want to state that the power keeps going up.
18 I'm based on a very low income, and sickness. And
19 they tried to work with me, but I just cannot
20 afford them going up. I mean, right now, I'm able
21 to manage what I can manage.

22 And so that's what I really wanted to let you
23 know, that I feel very strongly that I wish they
24 wouldn't go up on it.

25 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you, Ms. Bryant.

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1 Hang on.

2 Any questions from the parties?

3 **MR. NELSON:** Thank you for testifying.

4 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Commissioners, any
5 questions?

6 [No response]

7 Thank you, Ms. Bryant. Appreciate you being
8 here.

9 [Witness excused]

10 [Witness affirmed]

11 THEREUPON came,

12 **J A M E S H I L L , J R . ,**

13 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

14 **WITNESS:** My name is James Hill, and I'm from
15 317 Bagwell Road, Gray Court, South Carolina.

16 My wife and I are of the frame of mind that we
17 want to leave as small a footprint on the country
18 and our environment as we can. We recycle
19 everything. Everything.

20 And we retired in 2016, and part of our
21 retirement was a gift to ourselves of an investment
22 in solar energy. So I'm one of those people that
23 you've read about in the paper that said are going
24 to be hit the worst by the increase of the \$20 a
25 week bill – or, \$20 a month bill. There's months

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1 where that \$20 will actually double our power bill,
2 believe it or not. You may look at me and say,
3 “What you here crying about?” But that was part of
4 the investment, so that as we grew older, we’d be
5 doing good to our environment and then – and, you
6 know, take away from us.

7 Twenty dollars [\$20] a month to every house in
8 North Carolina and South Carolina on Duke Power is
9 a lot of money. And you’re talking about cutting
10 down the kilowatt per hour. And that will help
11 anybody with a big business, industries that burn a
12 whole lot of energy. My wife and I usually sell
13 more energy to Duke Power on a monthly basis than
14 we buy from Duke Power. You’d think we wouldn’t
15 have a power bill, but we do, because they give us
16 pennies on the kilowatt-hour versus what they
17 charge us for their kilowatt-hours. We’re talking
18 about a 45 percent increase over a two-year period
19 of time for my power bill, with just this \$20 per
20 month.

21 When we bought this solar energy, we paid a
22 lot of money for it. Of course, we got a 30
23 percent federal tax credit, we got 25 percent State
24 tax credit, and we were supposed to get a \$5600
25 rebate from Duke Energy, which I haven’t gotten

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1 yet.

2 [Laughter]

3 I've been told on numerous occasions,
4 literally, that the check was in the mail. I've
5 called Duke Power and asked about this, and
6 immediately told "That person doesn't work here
7 anymore," before they even check a roll call to see
8 if someone worked there anymore.

9 If there's anybody here from Duke Power that
10 would like to talk to me about this, I've got my
11 contract in an envelope here, where I'm waiting on
12 that rebate.

13 **COMMISSIONER ERVIN:** Mr. Bagwell – is that
14 your name? I didn't hear.

15 **WITNESS:** My name is Hill. I live on Bagwell
16 Road.

17 **COMMISSIONER ERVIN:** I see, yeah. Mr. Hill,
18 you see the gentleman behind you in the white
19 shirt? He's from Duke Power – Duke Energy. Used
20 to call it Duke Power. And he can help you make
21 sure that you get your credit. If you would like
22 to speak to him before you leave, he can get your
23 information. And if you want to speak with these
24 folks here, from the Office of Regulatory Staff,
25 they have a table, as well. Just check in with

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1 them. They've got two people working on it.

2 **WITNESS:** I appreciate your time. Thanks for
3 listening.

4 **COMMISSIONER ERVIN:** Thank you, sir.

5 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you, Mr. Hill.

6 **VICE CHAIRMAN WILLIAMS:** Mr. Chairman, I have
7 a question for Mr. Hill.

8 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Hang on, Mr. Hill. Mr.
9 Hill?

10 First, any questions from the parties?

11 **MR. NELSON:** No, I'd just like to thank Mr.
12 Hill.

13 There is one thing: I'd like to give – we have
14 a 1-800 number that we allow people to – for people
15 to call in. So, if you – and I didn't give that
16 out, and I apologize, when I started this evening.
17 But if people need to contact the Office of
18 Regulatory Staff, if you've got something to write
19 this down with, our 1-800 number is 1-800-922-1531.
20 You can call that number at any time. If you have
21 any issues, such as Mr. Hill has here, please feel
22 free to give us a call. If we can help with
23 anything tonight, if you're not happy with –

24 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** That's for the Office of
25 Regulatory Staff. It's 1-800-922-1531. 1-800-922-

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1531. That's the Office of Regulatory Staff.

Commission Williams.

VICE CHAIRMAN WILLIAMS: Thank you, Mr.
Chairman.

EXAMINATION

BY VICE CHAIRMAN WILLIAMS:

Q Mr. Hill, I had two questions for you. Considering the proposed rate increase, hypothetically speaking, if it was granted, as proposed, and you didn't have solar panels, would you still make the same investment in solar panels? If you didn't have them today and the rate increase was granted, would it be worth the investment to try to save energy to have solar panels?

A It's something that's just inside me. It's a mindset.

Q Uh-huh. I'm asking from a fiscal perspective, because I understand your bill is pretty low, and if I understood you correctly, if this rate increase were passed, it would more than double?

A It would be at least a 50 percent increase on the average month, yes.

Q Does that cut into the reason why you got solar panels?

A There wasn't a proposal for \$20 back two years ago.

Q Right, that's what I'm saying. If it were, would you hesitate about making that same decision?

A I would probably still look into investing in solar,

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1 yes, sir.

2 **Q** Okay. Now, could you tell me a little bit more about
3 this \$5600 that you say you were promised by Duke?

4 **A** At the time we purchased our solar, there was a lot of
5 push for people to get solar, you know, and part of the
6 thing was the federal tax reduction, the State tax, and
7 then Duke Power was also giving you this promise of a
8 rebate if you installed solar, and, of course, the thing
9 called net metering where they buy your excess power.

10 **Q** Right, but you're saying that Duke Power promised you
11 \$5600.

12 **A** Well, I've got a contract here [indicating].

13 **Q** Mr. Hill, I really want you to follow up with – follow
14 up with Duke Power, but I really want you to follow up
15 with ORS.

16 **A** I've tried –

17 **Q** The Office of –

18 **A** I've tried lots of ways to follow up with Duke Power.

19 **Q** All right. And I understand your frustration, but I
20 really want you to follow up with ORS, the Office of
21 Regulatory Staff, and give them that contract and give
22 them an opportunity to help you. Nothing against Duke,
23 but I really want you to follow up with the State agency
24 responsible for the public interest.

25 **A** Okay.

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1 **Q** All right? Thank you.

2 **A** Thank you.

3 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Commissioners, anything
4 else? Any other questions?

5 [No response]

6 Thank you, Mr. Hill.

7 **WITNESS:** Thank you.

8 [Witness excused]

9 **MR. DONG:** Before Mr. Arden speaks, I'd like
10 to go ahead and give the next three names, to keep
11 this moving: Kay Jennings, Marvin Ivie, and Randall
12 Tate.

13 [Witness affirmed]

14 **THEREUPON** came,

15 **R O B E R T A R D E N , P h . D . ,**

16 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

17 **WITNESS:** Robert Arden. 14 Blue Water Trail,
18 Taylors, South Carolina.

19 Good evening. As to my background, I have a
20 Ph.D. in economics. My comments on the proposed
21 rate increase include fairness, incentives, and
22 return on shareholder equity.

23 Duke uses a two-part tariff, which includes a
24 fixed charge and a usage charge. An increase in
25 the fixed charge from \$8.29 to \$28 per month is

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1 regressive. For example, high-income families will
2 have a smaller increase in their utility bills than
3 low- and middle-income families. Rising
4 inequality. This raises the question: Why impose
5 an unfair increase on low- and middle-income
6 families?

7 **VOICE:** Amen.

8 **WITNESS:** Also, Duke Energy is lowering the
9 usage charge. This is designed to reduce people's
10 incentives to use alternative sources of energy or
11 energy efficient housing and appliances. Duke
12 Energy Carolinas acknowledges that it faces
13 competition from these sources, which are slowing
14 the growth of Duke's sales. The rate structure
15 allows Duke to tap into the consumer's pocketbook
16 while encouraging usage to protect Duke's revenues.
17 With climate change considered a crisis, this is
18 the wrong direction for Duke Energy. The rate
19 structure should encourage people to be more energy
20 efficient.

21 In 2018, Duke Energy's return on shareholder
22 equity was 6.2 percent and 9.3 percent for Duke
23 Energy Carolinas. Duke Energy Carolinas' return on
24 equity compares favorably with the roughly 10
25 percent return for the electric utility industry

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1 peer companies like Exelon and the Southern
2 Company. Furthermore, both Duke Energy and Duke
3 Energy Carolinas have lower levels of productivity
4 compared to these peer companies, as measured by
5 asset turnover. Duke can control its own destiny
6 regarding return on equity by improving its
7 productivity.

8 On the other hand, the cost of equity for
9 utilities, excluding water utilities, according to
10 one expert is 4.3 percent, not the 10.75 percent in
11 the Duke filing.

12 In terms of credit ratings, Duke Energy
13 Carolinas is rated high by both the S&P and Moody's
14 credit rating agencies, and the rate increase to
15 support a higher return on shareholder equity for
16 Duke Energy Carolinas is not warranted, based on
17 this information.

18 Duke Energy Carolinas should invest in a safe,
19 secure, and reliable infrastructure, and consumers
20 fund these investments, but rates must be set in an
21 appropriate and judicious manner, which is not the
22 case here. The current rate increase request
23 should, in my opinion, be reduced and restructured.
24 Thank you.

25 [Applause]

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1 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you, Dr. Arden. Dr.
2 Arden, if you would stay there for a second.

3 Questions from the parties? Mr. Nelson?

4 **MR. NELSON:** Thank you, no.

5 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Okay. Commissioners, any
6 questions?

7 [No response]

8 Thank you, Dr. Arden.

9 **COMMISSIONER ERVIN:** I had a question for Dr.
10 Arden, if you don't mind.

11 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Okay. Commissioner Ervin.

12 **COMMISSIONER ERVIN:** I'm sorry to bring him
13 back, but I –

14 **WITNESS:** [Indicating.]

15 **EXAMINATION**

16 **BY COMMISSIONER ERVIN:**

17 **Q** I'm interested in knowing – you know, we look at a lot
18 of different numbers or metrics, when we evaluate a
19 publicly owned utility, and you mentioned that their
20 productivity is low, their productivity rates or ratings
21 are low. Could you give us a little more detail about
22 how you found that information and how they could
23 improve it?

24 **A** Right. Well, where I found it was in the SEC filings
25 that Duke Energy makes, and they have information in

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1 there on their income statement and balance sheet. And
2 so I was able to compute that for Duke Energy and Duke
3 Energy Carolinas, as well as the peer companies.

4 **Q** And how could – what exactly, just in laymen's
5 terminology, could they do to improve that productivity
6 rate?

7 **A** Well, that's difficult for me to say, but, usually with
8 capital investment, that usually improves productivity.
9 As workers have more capital, they're more productive,
10 so that's one way to do it. Another way is to review
11 their staffing levels and determine whether or not they
12 should make reductions.

13 I think I heard them say in the news awhile back
14 that Duke Energy was laying off some people, so – I
15 mean, that's not something you want to say to do, but
16 it's something that companies need to look at.

17 **Q** Well, is a fair statement that if you invest in our
18 employees, with salary – appropriate salary increases
19 and benefits, they become more productive as a general
20 rule?

21 **A** Yes. Yes, that's absolutely true.

22 **Q** And we've heard some testimony already that there are
23 some service issues out there, in terms of customer
24 response time and by phone, and customers not being
25 properly serviced when they have issues with their

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1 meters, and issues with downed power or outages. Would
2 that factor – would those things factor into
3 productivity, as well?

4 **A** Oh, of course. If you have to go repeatedly to the same
5 customer to fix a problem, that hurts your productivity.
6 So maybe better training of the workers is required, or
7 maybe sending a couple of workers out to take care of it
8 once. They'd have to look at how they could do that,
9 but that would certainly –

10 **Q** And that – yes, sir. And that would include call
11 centers, as well, as we've heard some testimony that a
12 lot of customers get bounced around from –

13 **VOICE:** Yes.

14 **BY COMMISSIONER ERVIN:**

15 **Q** – caller to caller, and from office to office? With
16 proper training, could these call centers improve their
17 productivity?

18 **A** Yes, I think so. And also, perhaps, giving the person
19 who's answering the call, give them more flexibility.
20 Quite often, they just have a script and they can't
21 deviate from that. And when the customer's question,
22 you know, calls for a deviation, you get sent to
23 somebody else, and that's very frustrating.

24 **Q** So that would mean additional training?

25 **A** Yes.

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1 **Q** And resources? And perhaps delegation of authority, so
2 they can make decisions for the customer –

3 **A** That's right.

4 **Q** – about problems.

5 **A** That's right.

6 **Q** Thank you, sir.

7 **A** Okay. Thank you.

8 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you, Dr. Arden.

9 [Witness excused]

10 [Witness affirmed]

11 THEREUPON came,

12 **R A N D A L L T A T E ,**

13 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

14 **WITNESS:** My name is Randall Tate. I live at
15 404 Middleshare Drive, Mauldin.

16 I'm a retired Marine, and I'm also on a fixed
17 income.

18 I would like to say, when it comes to the
19 smart meter, I never learnt anything about the
20 smart meter. I don't know what my power bill is.
21 All I know is I get a bill and I pay it. I don't
22 know anything about it; can't read it. But the old
23 meter that went around, that was my meter.

24 [Laughter]

25 Go in and cut the stove on and it go fast?

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1 Cut it, it go down?

2 [Laughter]

3 This meter, I have no clue on what's going on
4 with it. I don't know if it's the public training,
5 or whatever. I talked to the young lady – she's
6 not here, but I gave her my number. I think a lot
7 of times, you look around the room, the last couple
8 of days or week or month on the TV, it's just an
9 outpouring of concern. I mean, there's a lot of
10 folk here. There's a lot of Duke Power. I don't
11 understand. I mean, I know Duke Power has to make
12 money. They made \$3.1 billion last year, of
13 profit. It's the only farming you can do good.

14 I have a letter here was handing out. I don't
15 know how true it is, but Lynn Good, \$21 million. I
16 mean, these are exorbitant. I wish I could make
17 \$21 million, but it said how it's a one-time
18 payment. It's just – I don't understand it. I
19 mean, I know it's a business, have to run a
20 business. But the people can only take so much.

21 **VOICE:** Yeah.

22 **WITNESS:** Senior citizens all on fixed income.
23 They only make so much. When I talk to anybody
24 about anything Duke Power, that power bill gonna
25 come up in the conversation every time.

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1 So whatever y'all have to do to fix the
2 problem, I'll appreciate it. I appreciate my time
3 you're giving me to stand here and talk. But this
4 is a serious concern. This is not something that
5 you can come here and listen to what we have to
6 say, and then just leave it as the same thing. I
7 just think it's people. It ain't Duke Power or
8 Duke Energy – I like they changed the name from
9 Duke Power. But I just think it – something has to
10 be done for the people that's paying them bills,
11 especially for the ones on a fixed income.

12 So that's all I have to say. I thank you for
13 giving me the time to talk.

14 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you, Mr. Tate. Hang
15 on.

16 Questions from the parties?

17 **MR. NELSON:** Thank you.

18 **CROSS EXAMINATION**

19 **BY MR. NELSON:**

20 **Q** Mr. Tate, when did you have this new meter installed, do
21 you recall?

22 **A** Oh, about two or three years ago.

23 **Q** Have you seen any kind of a change in your average –

24 **A** My bill went up.

25 **VOICES:** Yes.

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1 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Get back to that
2 microphone, if you would.

3 **WITNESS:** My bill went up. But the thing with
4 the meter that puzzles me, and I talked to one of
5 the Duke representatives, is how can you read a
6 meter from a mile away? I don't understand that.

7 **VOICE:** That's right.

8 **WITNESS:** They can read my meter at my house,
9 one mile away. I just don't – I can't fathom that.
10 I'm sorry. I don't see the accuracy, me and my
11 neighbor house so close together? I just can't
12 understand it.

13 **MR. NELSON:** Thank you, Mr. Tate. Thank you
14 for your service.

15 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Commissioners, any
16 questions?

17 [No response]

18 Thank you, Mr. Tate.

19 [Witness excused]

20 **MR. DONG:** I believe, Ms. Jennings – is it Ms.
21 Jennings?

22 [Witness affirmed]

23 THEREUPON came,

24 **K A Y J E N N I N G S ,**
25 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

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1 **WITNESS:** Yes, sir. I'm Kay Jennings, 100
2 Welcome Street. My son's going to be doing the
3 talking for me. I'm disabled. I'm on a set
4 income.

5 Bubba?

6 **MR. MARVIN IVIE:** They might swear me in.

7 **WITNESS:** You're going to have to swear my son
8 in.

9 **MR. MARVIN IVIE:** Go ahead and finish your
10 stuff. Go ahead and finish whatever you want to
11 say.

12 **WITNESS:** I'm just on a set income. I'm on
13 oxygen. I have a lot of health problems. And my
14 son only comes once a week to check on me. And I
15 have a very rough time. I have a therapist that's
16 coming working with me twice a week.

17 I fell just the other Sunday in the bathtub,
18 and had to go to the hospital. I had to get my own
19 self – it took me an hour to get out of the tub.

20 I have a very rough time at home by myself.
21 But my son, he comes and checks on me once a week.
22 He has to work out of town because of his job.

23 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you, Ms. Jennings.

24 Did you want to speak for her?

25 **MR. IVIE:** [Nodding head.]

[Witness affirmed]

THEREUPON came,

M A R V I N I V I E ,

who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

WITNESS IVIE: My name is Marvin Ivie. My address is 100 Welcome Street, Greenville.

I get Mom's – I'm on her checking account, too, so every time something happens with the checking account, I get something on my phone, or things like that. I noticed that Mom went in under, and she's never done that. I've always made sure she don't, because I can transfer right off the bat, on my stuff. But I noticed the last two months, Mom's paying double on her power bill.

What she sees at the end – I have the power bills with me. What she sees, "Need to pay." She doesn't see on the left side of what was paid already. So she keeps paying, and there's no credit being added to her bill. So it's kind of like somebody's double-dipping off the power.

So I don't know – and the last – it's just the last two months. Okay? But that's \$98 or \$100 – that's \$200 that she could have in her bank account, besides, you know, just going under and having to pay fees after fees for that, you know,

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1 and I don't want this to be a repetitive deal.

2 So that's why I'm upset, because I'm – I need
3 to know what's being taken out, and I know it's an
4 automatic draft. I do know that she gets the bill;
5 she writes the date that the bill shows up at the
6 house. The day it comes, she writes that. And
7 then she pays it. So, you know, everybody knows
8 it. You're set on – you're paying on the 1st. So,
9 the 1st, the house payment is made, all the bills
10 are paid on the first. And now it's saving – when
11 it automatically comes out, they convert it into
12 automatic. It comes out 12, 13 days later. Well,
13 after it's paid, they make another bill, but the
14 old bill is still on there, which doubles the
15 payment. So I don't understand why there's no
16 credit there.

17 So I'm – you know, I just don't want it to go
18 any further but within a month or two.

19 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** I would suggest talking
20 with Mr. Preston back here. He can probably help
21 you with that – right behind you – I'm sure.

22 **WITNESS IVIE:** Okay. All right.

23 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you, Mr. Ivie.

24 Any questions from the parties.

25 **MR. NELSON:** I was just going to say, Mr.

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Ivie, if Duke can't help you –

WITNESS IVIE: Uh-huh?

MR. NELSON: – come see us. I've got two people outside here, back by the big American flag. If you walk out and make a right.

WITNESS IVIE: Okay.

MR. NELSON: I've got a table set up back there that says "ORS" on it. We'd be happy to talk to you.

WITNESS IVIE: Okay. And that's one thing, you know, people need to just check, you know, on your family to make sure they're not getting a bad deal or anything like that. Everybody needs to step up.

CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you.

WITNESS IVIE: Thank you. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Commissioners, any questions?

COMMISSIONER WHITFIELD: Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Commissioner Whitfield.

COMMISSIONER WHITFIELD: Yeah, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

EXAMINATION

BY COMMISSIONER WHITFIELD:

Q Mr. Ivie, I would just ask you – you stated you

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1 obviously are – you handle her banking. You obviously
2 are able to or authorized to talk to Duke on her behalf;
3 is that correct?

4 **A** [WITNESS IVIE] Yes, sir. Yeah, we – she had to fill out
5 a paper for things, and, you know, everything – I can
6 answer everything for her.

7 **Q** Let me ask you one more question, if I might. It might
8 help you. Have you had a conversation with Duke about
9 putting her in a protected class, with her medical –
10 with her being on oxygen, so that there's no
11 interruption?

12 **A** [WITNESS IVIE] The one thing that she had to fill out
13 from her doctor would be, when the power goes out,
14 she'll be one of the first ones –

15 **Q** Correct.

16 **A** [WITNESS IVIE] – to have the power restored, because of
17 the oxygen. She has the bottle that she can wheel
18 around, but at home she's on a –

19 **Q** High priority?

20 **A** [WITNESS IVIE] – generator or – it's high priority, is
21 the sticker on the thing.

22 **Q** But do you also still have her on there to make sure
23 she's not cut off – with the problems you're describing
24 with payment and it's not being properly credited, have
25 you had any conversation with the company about that?

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1 A [WITNESS IVIE] No, I haven't.

2 A [WITNESS JENNINGS] Duke Power calls me to let me know if
3 there's a bad storm, and they give me a phone number to
4 call them if my power goes out.

5 A [WITNESS IVIE] I understand your question.

6 Q Yes, sir?

7 A [WITNESS IVIE] And I will – I will –

8 Q Well, you've got the South Carolina State Office of
9 Regulatory Staff here and you've got Duke officials
10 here, and I would strongly urge you to try to meet with
11 them after the hearing and get some help.

12 A [WITNESS IVIE] All right. Thank you, so much.

13 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Mr. Ivie.

14 WITNESS IVIE: Thank you for your time.

15 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you.

16 [Witnesses Jennings and Ivie were
17 excused.]

18 MR. DONG: I'm going to call the next three
19 names. Richard Holme Belo_[sic], Jean Gore, and Edgar
20 Duvall.

21 [Witness affirmed]

22 THEREUPON came,

23 R I C H A R D H O L M B E R G ,

24 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

25 WITNESS: Richard Holmberg, 711 Confederate

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1 Circle, in Taylors –

2 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: If you would, start over
3 and get into that microphone so Ms. Wheat can hear
4 you.

5 WITNESS: Oh, I'm sorry.

6 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: That's okay.

7 WITNESS: Richard Holmberg, 711 Confederate
8 Circle, in Taylors, South Carolina.

9 MR. DONG: Could you spell your name, sir,
10 your last name?

11 WITNESS: H-o-l-m-b-e-r-g.

12 MR. DONG: Thank you, very much.

13 WITNESS: Thank you. I'm here tonight to
14 voice my opposition to this rate increase. One
15 thing I'd like to find out is why this flat fee
16 cannot be posted on our bill. It's hidden from the
17 public.

18 This rate increase is going to prevent new
19 companies from coming into South Carolina. People
20 that are on fixed incomes, it's going to hurt them,
21 as well. And people will – this will also affect
22 the housing market here, with these rates going up.

23 I don't – I saw this paper they handed out
24 about the salaries, here. I don't know if that's
25 true or not, but if that is true, these people –

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1 they can afford these increases, where people that
2 are on fixed incomes cannot.

3 So I would strongly urge you Commissioners to
4 vote no on this rate increase. Thank you.

5 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you, Mr. Holmberg.

6 Any questions from the parties?

7 **MR. NELSON:** Thank you, sir, for your
8 testimony.

9 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Commissioners?

10 [No response]

11 Thank you, sir.

12 [Witness excused]

13 [Witness affirmed]

14 THEREUPON came,

15 **G E N E G O R E ,**

16 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

17 **WITNESS:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and fellow
18 Commissioners, and Senator Allen. My name is Gene
19 Gore, G-o-r-e. I'm just a taxpayer in Greenville
20 County.

21 I'm here for twofold reasons, and I'm the
22 culprit that was passing out these pamphlets,
23 because I hate to use a word this strong but I
24 think it's downright criminal when you've got a
25 monopoly like Duke Power –

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1 [Applause]

2 – that can hold people hostage like they do.
3 I'm in the car business, and I wish I was the only
4 car dealer in the State, but they'd lock me away.
5 I'd be up there with Manafort.

6 [Laughter]

7 But, you know, when you've got a company –
8 another word I use as criminal – that has the
9 audacity to ask for an increase in anything, that
10 made \$3.1 billion last year.

11 **VOICE:** That's right.

12 **VOICES:** Yeah. Yeah.

13 **WITNESS:** When you've got a lady sitting up
14 there, Lynn Good – and I wish she was here so I
15 could face her.

16 **VOICE:** Yeah.

17 **WITNESS:** – making \$21.4 million dollars a
18 year. You've got people out here can't even afford
19 groceries.

20 [Applause]

21 You've got four executive vice presidents for
22 Duke Power – and I'm sure that you Duke Power
23 employees here don't make anything like they do.
24 They average \$3.2 million a year in salary. And
25 they ask for an increase? Please.

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1 [Applause]

2 The second reason that I'm here, I want to
3 tell you about this beautiful little smart box
4 they're putting on your house.

5 **VOICE:** Yeah. I know about it.

6 **WITNESS:** I get a phone call about two or
7 three months ago. This guy says he works for Duke
8 Power – which I checked him out, and he really
9 didn't; he was a contractor. You might want to
10 check in on this [indicating] – using Duke Power's
11 name. Wants to put a smart box on my old house
12 that's been there since '71. Says it's gonna save
13 me money. I said, "What's it going to cost me?"
14 "Nothing." "Good, have at it." They come out and
15 put it up. My light bill went from \$350 to \$700
16 dollars a month for the next month.

17 **VOICE:** Yeah, that's that smart meter.

18 **WITNESS:** I called Duke Power, because the
19 second month it went up another \$200. Why is it
20 going up? I said, "It's got to be because of this
21 smart box you put on my house." "Oh, no. It's
22 because of the weather." They blame it on God.

23 So you know, this ain't true. So Duke Power
24 don't help me at all. And I go through that
25 rigmarole like y'all was talking about, 40

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1 different phone calls to get one person. So
2 finally I had to boil down and call an electrician
3 to come out and check what's wrong with this great
4 smart box that they check from a mile away.

5 What was wrong with it, they didn't even have
6 enough sense – this ex- – this contractor, to put
7 440 volts on my system. I was burning strip heat
8 for two months.

9 **VOICE:** Oh, man.

10 **WITNESS:** Two months, I'm burning it. And I
11 can afford my power bill. Don't get me wrong. I
12 don't live on a fixed income, but I feel really
13 sorry for people that do.

14 **VOICE:** Yes.

15 **VOICE:** Amen.

16 **WITNESS:** And that, you know, I'm suing them
17 right now with a magistrate down in Simpsonville,
18 to get my \$300 a month back, and I'm gonna win –

19 [Applause]

20 – because there ain't nobody – there ain't
21 nobody on a jury that likes y'all –

22 [3-minute alarm]

23 – so they're going to rule in my favor, and
24 I'm going to get my money back.

25 [Applause, laughter]

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1 One last thing. One last thing I'd just like
2 to say.

3 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Go ahead.

4 **WITNESS:** Okay. One last thing is that, if
5 any of you people on this Commission give them a
6 rate increase, I don't see how in the living hell
7 y'all can look in the mirror. Thank you.

8 [Applause]

9 **VOICES:** Yeah.

10 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Please let us – so we can
11 hear him.

12 **CROSS EXAMINATION**

13 **BY MR. NELSON:**

14 **Q** Mr. Gore, I wanted to ask something. We've heard a lot
15 about these meters over the last couple of days.

16 **A** Yes.

17 **Q** So this meter that you got was just installed like a
18 couple of months ago; is that correct?

19 **A** It was installed. My power bill went up. Duke Power
20 themselves came out, after I got the contractor to check
21 and they said it was fine. Only reason I found out
22 about the voltage was because a Duke Power employee came
23 out and said, "No 440." I didn't know what 440 was, but
24 when I got the electrician, I found out.

25 **Q** Well, it's double 220, right?

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1 **A** It's double 220, yeah.

2 **Q** So that's – and do you believe – I mean, nothing's been
3 done there to fix it, as far as you're concerned, so –

4 **A** I fixed it myself.

5 **Q** I mean, as far as them fixing the bill, where you were
6 burning twice as much energy.

7 **A** No, nobody's fixed that. And I've called everybody
8 known to man, and nobody's fixed it. And I'm gonna fix
9 it.

10 [Laughter]

11 It's just gonna come down to a jury, which I
12 believe in.

13 [Applause]

14 But, you know, I can tell you one thing. That lady
15 making \$404,000 a week ain't gonna fix it.

16 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Commissioner Ervin.

17 **MR. NELSON:** Can I ask one more thing? I'm
18 sorry.

19 **BY MR. NELSON:**

20 **Q** Mr. Gore, I don't think I have an address for you.

21 **A** 230 Tar – T-a-r – Boulevard, Greenville, 29605.

22 [Applause]

23 **MR. NELSON:** Thank you, sir. Appreciate it.

24 **COMMISSIONER ERVIN:** Hang on.

25 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Hang on.

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Commissioner Ervin.

EXAMINATION

BY COMMISSIONER ERVIN:

Q Mr. Gore, you're not the first person who we've heard – we had a public hearing Tuesday night in Spartanburg, we had one in Anderson last night. And we've heard others, several others, say that bills went up substantially after these smart boxes were installed.

VOICE: Yes, they do.

WITNESS: Sure, they did. They're collecting their money back. It's obvious.

BY COMMISSIONER ERVIN:

Q Here's what I want you to do. We need somebody that can meet with the Office of Regulatory Staff so that we can investigate this on a large scale, because we need to get to the bottom of it.

[Applause]

VOICE: Yeah.

BY COMMISSIONER ERVIN:

Q And I want you to – you're going to need this in your jury trial anyway. But what I want you to do is get copies of all your bills.

A [Indicating.]

Q I see you've kept them.

A I've got them.

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1 **Q** Before and after this installation. Get the names of
2 the installers, if you have them.

3 **A** I got that, too.

4 **Q** Good. Their names, addresses, phone numbers.

5 **A** [Nodding head.]

6 **Q** And then give them a statement of exactly what happened.
7 Just write it out, you know –

8 **A** Give who the statement?

9 **Q** I want you to give it to the Office of Regulatory Staff
10 and –

11 **A** Okay. I'll do that, yeah.

12 **Q** – he's going to give you a card, and his staff is in the
13 back. But this needs to be investigated, and we want to
14 investigate it as soon as possible.

15 **VOICE:** Yes.

16 **VOICE:** That's right.

17 **WITNESS:** Sure will. And I just hope and pray
18 that you people will be fair, because don't think I
19 was getting on you. I appreciate your help.

20 **COMMISSIONER ERVIN:** Thank you.

21 [Applause]

22 [Witness excused]

23 **MR. DONG:** Before Mr. Duvall speaks, let me go
24 ahead and call the next three witnesses, so I can
25 keep it moving. John Wiebel, or Wiebel. Mark –

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1 **MR. LIVERNOIS:** Livernois.

2 **MR. DONG:** – Livernois? Okay.

3 **MR. LIVERNOIS:** Livernois.

4 **MR. DONG:** Livernois? And David Sammons.

5 Thank you.

6 [Witness affirmed]

7 THEREUPON came,

8 **E D G A R D U V A L L ,**

9 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

10 **WITNESS:** My name is Ed Duvall. I live at 35
11 Long Forest Drive in Greenville.

12 I don't have a fixed speech, but, you're
13 supposed to take care of the poor people, number
14 one. Forty percent of the population are pretty
15 dirt cheap, poor people. If you put a \$28 charge
16 base on the \$10,000 house this person lives in, and
17 then you put the same \$28 charge on the million
18 dollar house, it doesn't seem fair.

19 If you're gonna do anything, go up on the
20 usage. The million dollar house is gonna use
21 10,000 kilowatt-hours; I'm going to use 400
22 kilowatt-hours. I can go around with a coat on in
23 the wintertime, turn my heat down to 60. I turn my
24 water heater down to 90 degrees. I can do things
25 to reduce my power consumption. You put \$28 on my

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1 bill, I have to pay it. I have to do without that
2 canned food [indicating].

3 **VOICE:** All right.

4 **WITNESS:** And far as those smart meters, I
5 don't know how – I've had people that have power
6 bills' gone up, but I bought a new toaster oven,
7 and I checked my power. I had 120 volts when I
8 started out. And, you know, I plugged up and
9 turned on the power strip, and my voltage went down
10 to 119 volts. When I energized the toaster oven,
11 my voltage went down to 117 volts. And if anybody
12 knows anything about checking the power, if you
13 have the power and you know the wattage of that,
14 and you've got your voltage, you divide that into
15 the power and that gives you the current that
16 you're using. All right. That's gonna make your
17 power bill go up if you have low voltage.

18 And I guess that's all I need to say. I'm out
19 of time.

20 [Applause]

21 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you, Mr. Duvall.

22 Questions from the parties?

23 **MR. NELSON:** Thank you, sir, for your
24 testimony.

25 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Commissioners, any

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1 questions?

2 [No response]

3 Thank you, Mr. Duvall.

4 **WITNESS:** Y'all take care.

5 [Witness excused]

6 [Witness affirmed]

7 THEREUPON came,

8 **J O H N F . W I E B E L ,**

9 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

10 **WITNESS:** My name is John Wiebel. But just in
11 case you wonder, I hear that "weeble" all the time,
12 that we wobble but we don't fall down.

13 [Applause]

14 Now, Mr. Gore touched on the corporate culture
15 at Duke Power. All right. I've been at the House.
16 I'm kind of behind my game. I've been in two
17 rounds of this in Columbia on the record. I would
18 talk and all the interest, when they saw me online,
19 you know, "How'd you get in there, blah, blah,
20 blah?" I just happen to be John Q. Citizen and I
21 guess I got lucky. This is a little more informal
22 than what I'm used to. And I appreciate that, you
23 all.

24 I looked at the ethics reports on all y'all,
25 and I see you're reducing all your convention

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1 expenses and all that interest stuff that might,
2 you know, y'all [indicating] got questions about.
3 But that looks like you guys are really trying to
4 change the culture of the PSC, and I appreciate
5 that.

6 Now, the corporate culture. I hope you're
7 looking and listening real close. And keep doing
8 it, because the need is great. The need is great
9 over here [indicating] and the money is small.
10 Over here [indicating], the corporate want is great
11 and the money is bigger than that.

12 **VOICE:** Yeah.

13 **WITNESS:** With all the money they make, that
14 means they pay all their bills, all their
15 shareholders and everybody, and still got a couple
16 of billion in the bank.

17 Now, I heard, the last few – since y'all been
18 coming, something about a nuclear plant expense in
19 Gaffney? How long ago was that? Why we got to pay
20 for that?

21 **VOICE:** Yeah.

22 [Applause]

23 **WITNESS:** We don't get to say what they spend
24 it on, how they spend it. Why, when they blow it,
25 do they come to us?

1 VOICES: Yeah.

2 WITNESS: That's where it's at.

3 My fellow veterans, hands up. Hands up.

4 AUDIENCE MEMBERS: [Indicating.]

5 [Applause]

6 WITNESS: Thank y'all. Thank y'all.

7 You see who's in here tonight? You see who's
8 in here tonight. We got one senator. One senator.
9 Thank you, Senator. And the people in here, like I
10 said, you just look at who you're talking to. This
11 is not – this is not the country club crowd,
12 gentlemen –

13 VOICE: All right.

14 WITNESS: – and ma'am. I mean, it's just
15 plain as that. And like I said, they come back.
16 Now, people don't understand; they get 1 percent a
17 year without even going out the door, correct?

18 VOICE: Right.

19 WITNESS: It was. One percent a year, so,
20 next five years, they get 5 percent. They want 13
21 percent. Okay. Social Security, 2.8 percent cost-
22 of-living, Medicare up. That means nothing.

23 VOICE: Yeah.

24 VOICE: That's right.

25 WITNESS: Wages up 4 percent. Gas prices up

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1 30 percent.

2 **VOICE:** That's right.

3 **WITNESS:** Okay, lately. We got a little
4 break, but it's coming back. You can see it.

5 So all this, and now the grocery store, when
6 they saw that money coming for us, they raise their
7 prices.

8 **VOICES:** Yeah.

9 **WITNESS:** I was in there a week before payday.
10 I want to tell you like it is: They got your money.
11 So everybody's lined up to get our money, but we
12 don't have nothing to say about it.

13 It's y'all [indicating]. Indirect democracy.
14 Democracy means representative government. Y'all
15 represent us, just like our politicians. They
16 elect y'all in this State. And Judge Ervin, I'm
17 glad to see you there. I know – I know and respect
18 you.

19 [3-minute alarm]

20 You're doing great, Mr. Chairman. I'm so
21 proud of you.

22 Now, you just can't – here's the deal.
23 Compromise. No 13. Give them 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, next
24 five years. Give them a total of 3 percent on top
25 of that. That's it. They get lower than we get –

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1 they can't have no more than we got. That's just
2 it.

3 [Applause]

4 That's all. I can pay my power bill, but you
5 all see the people that's on my doorstep, and I
6 help pay that.

7 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you, Mr. Wiebel.

8 **WITNESS:** And that's exactly right. Thank
9 y'all. Be careful going home, please.

10 [Laughter, applause]

11 One quick – one quick thing. I live – my
12 property, my front yard, my porch, is on the line
13 of the high-tension line that cuts across South
14 Greenville. I've been there two years. I've been
15 spraying and hacking on their kudzu for two years.
16 I'm giving them the bill tonight. They told me
17 they'd come out, they said routine maintenance will
18 get it.

19 I went to a meeting where they want to cut a
20 line through the Canterbury neighborhood in South
21 Greenville. Well, they come out when they want to
22 expand and make money and do what's good for them.
23 Talked to the head vegetation man, got his card.
24 Ain't seen him yet. So, I said, "Well, okay,
25 tonight they get a chance."

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1 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Mr. Nelson, do you have a
2 question?

3 **WITNESS:** I hope they'll act right. I want to
4 be like Mr. Gore in court.

5 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** I understand.

6 **WITNESS:** Thank y'all. God bless y'all.

7 **MR. NELSON:** I don't have any questions but
8 I'd like to say I enjoyed your testimony very much.

9 [Laughter]

10 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Commissioners?
11 Commissioner Ervin.

12 **EXAMINATION**

13 **BY COMMISSIONER ERVIN:**

14 **Q** John you did a few – John? I got a quick follow-up.
15 You are going through all the bills going up. You
16 didn't mention prescription medications. Those are
17 going up sky high.

18 **A** Well, I don't have to tell you that.

19 **Q** I mean, that's –

20 **A** I really don't.

21 **Q** – what we've been hearing. Is that true?

22 **A** You're right.

23 **Q** Big Pharma is taking us to the cleaners, and a lot of
24 these seniors are on multiple prescription medications.

25 **A** Right.

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1 **Q** Are they going to have a choice between paying their
2 medication bill or the power bill?

3 **A** Absolutely. And here's one that really kills me – and I
4 like to watch baseball. I'm a disabled veteran. They
5 show Cincinnati. I see on the wall out there, big old
6 fence says "Duke Energy," in the middle of Cincinnati
7 Reds baseball park. How much, y'all? A million? Two?
8 Twenty-five? Twenty, thirty, forty million?

9 [Laughter]

10 What's it doing on a wall in Cincinnati? You gave
11 them the money. Go up there and get it back. We ain't
12 paying for it.

13 [Laughter, applause]

14 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you.

15 [Witness excused]

16 Next witness.

17 [Witness affirmed]

18 THEREUPON came,

19 **M A R K J . L I V E R N O I S ,**

20 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

21 **WITNESS:** I'm Mark J. Livernois, spelled L-i-
22 v-e-r-n-o-i-s. If anybody knows French, it's
23 "Livernois." I'm originally from Detroit,
24 Michigan. I live at 104 Summerdale Drive, off of
25 Taylors Road, in Taylors, South Carolina 29687.

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1 I'm here to represent my small subdivision
2 called Kaledon Acres. We have 72 sites, homes, in
3 the area. The majority – well, I'd say everybody
4 is against this rate increase that Duke Power –
5 Duke Energy is requesting.

6 But we have a very special friend; her name is
7 Janet Lawson. She lives in Duncan. And she lives
8 there on her disability, Social Security Disability
9 only, with her little dog, Beau. And she wanted me
10 to tonight to tell you folks at the PSC, and also
11 to get back to Duke Energy, that she does
12 everything she can to cut back her bill and
13 because, number one, lately, during the last six
14 months of the year, she's had to cut back even
15 more, which means she goes into her grocery list
16 for the month. She shops once a month on a
17 Wednesday, when she gets her Social Security check,
18 and she shops for all her groceries that month.

19 She knows; she keeps track of everything. But
20 she says, "Duke Energy is raising – keeps raising
21 their rates on me, and," she says, "it's not fair
22 to low-income people."

23 Now, what she does to conserve Duke Energy's
24 power is she gets up in the morning, she shuts off
25 her heat, during this winter, number one, to

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1 conserve – well, not to use that power. She sits
2 all day. She doesn't watch her TV. Okay? She and
3 her dog stay there, again, to conserve power.
4 She's doing everything she does to cut back on her
5 electricity use, being a conservative that she is.

6 She wanted me – she gave me a letter that she
7 wanted me to give, but unfortunately I was at work
8 and I wasn't able to go home and get that letter.
9 But in that letter, she says, "Please, please do
10 something. Do not give in to Duke Energy. Do not
11 give them a percentage or something and say that
12 they can come back at a later date." And we just
13 hope that somehow God will help – help us all out.

14 [3-minute alarm]

15 Thank you.

16 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you. Any questions
17 for Mr. Livernois?

18 **WITNESS:** Livernois.

19 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Livernois.

20 **WITNESS:** Yes, sir.

21 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** I wanted to do it right.

22 **WITNESS:** Livernois.

23 **COMMISSIONER ERVIN:** Mr. Chairman?

24 **WITNESS:** Like the State of Illinois.

25 **COMMISSIONER ERVIN:** I –

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1 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Commissioner Ervin.

2 **EXAMINATION**

3 **BY COMMISSIONER ERVIN:**

4 **Q** I had pretty good grades in school, but I did get a D in
5 French, so I'm not gonna try to pronounce your name,
6 okay?

7 **A** Okay.

8 **Q** But I want you to tell her that we got the message. And
9 if she wants to send that letter, she can mail it to
10 this gentleman who can give you the card for ORS, and
11 maybe they'll make it a part of our record when we have
12 the hearing next week.

13 **A** I'll - I'll mail it to him.

14 **Q** All right. Tell her that she's in our prayers.

15 **A** I will do the same thing.

16 [Witness excused]

17 **MR. DONG:** Before Mr. Sammons starts, let me
18 go ahead and call the next three names. Albert
19 Fitzgerald, James Belson, and Patrick Cobb.

20 [Witness affirmed]

21 **THEREUPON** came,

22 **D A V I D S A M M O N S ,**

23 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

24 **WITNESS:** I'm David Sammons. My address is
25 925 Meece Bridge Road, Taylors, South Carolina.

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1 I'm not going to run through all the numbers
2 again and waste my time or your time. Everything
3 Mr. Gore said, I agree with that. He's right with
4 this \$21 million a year salary and stuff like that.
5 I'm not even going to bore you with that.

6 What I want to say is that, on my power bill,
7 I get this stuff every month. I get stuff in there
8 that doesn't amount to a hill of beans. They hit
9 the shredder. That's wasting money. That's
10 wasting paper, that's wasting trees. I'm tired of
11 getting it. It's just wasting money. And then
12 y'all want more money from me, for me to watch it
13 all wasted.

14 All right. It tells you things that you can
15 do to your home, okay? My home is the one I was
16 born and raised in, my dad built back in the '40s.
17 I try to follow those guidelines on how to make it
18 more energy efficient. I put in energy efficient
19 windows, I put in a new heat pump, I put in fire
20 logs, I put in all new appliances when I redid my
21 kitchen. Everything is energy efficient. I don't
22 even – I'm not at home at least 10 hours every day.
23 I'm somewhere. I run the thermostat up in the
24 summertime to 80; I run it down to 60 in the
25 winter, to keep that thing from running. But yet,

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1 now, Duke Energy comes along and says, "Well, you
2 did a great job. So now we want more money from
3 you because now you're dipping into our money by
4 saving what you're saving." And I feel like that's
5 what they think.

6 You know, if all of us did that, and we're
7 sending him \$50 apiece less every month, that's
8 dipping into theirs. So, they're just raising it,
9 to get our money back.

10 But what I really want people to think about
11 is I want y'all to look at this crowd out here.
12 These are people that are the backbone of this
13 country. These are people that work themselves to
14 death.

15 [Applause]

16 They got calluses on their hands to make this
17 country and make Greenville what it is today. Now
18 it's time for them to step aside and for more
19 people to come in behind them. And now we want to
20 punish them for what they have done for the last 50
21 or 60 years, working like they've worked. They're
22 low-income, they're on fixed incomes. I'm on a
23 fixed income. And I feel like everything that I've
24 done in my life, I'm just getting it shoved up in
25 my tail by Duke Energy by wanting more money out of

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1 it that I don't have.

2 [Applause]

3 So my main track is I followed those
4 guidelines. I invested almost \$20,000 in that
5 house to get it energy efficient. And my light
6 bill is better; it's \$100 a month. But if that
7 \$250 – or, 250 percent increase comes up from \$9 to
8 \$29, it's gonna shoot me back over \$100 again.
9 Then I got Charter sitting out there, every month
10 \$2 more a month that they go. I'm fixing to can
11 them.

12 [3-minute alarm]

13 The gas company, back up it goes. And all
14 this stuff started moving up within months after
15 our president gave us a tax cut.

16 **VOICE:** Yeah.

17 **WITNESS:** Now everybody's standing at the
18 door, wanting a piece of that tax cut. So we lost
19 anyway. So all of us –

20 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you, Mr. Sammons.

21 **WITNESS:** – that are here – and I hate to say
22 it that way, but that's the truth. That's how I
23 feel. And I didn't just walk in here to flap my
24 gums, okay? I prayed about this thing before I
25 came tonight, and that's why I'm here.

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1 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you, sir.

2 **WITNESS:** These people, I feel sorry for.

3 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Questions from the parties?

4 **MR. NELSON:** Thank you, sir.

5 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Commissioners, any
6 questions?

7 [No response]

8 Thank you, very much, Mr. Sammons.

9 **WITNESS:** You're welcome.

10 [Applause]

11 [Witness excused]

12 [Witness affirmed]

13 THEREUPON came,

14 **A L B E R T E . F I T Z G E R A L D ,**

15 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

16 **WITNESS:** My name is Albert Fitzgerald. I
17 live at 516 Cleveland Street here in Greenville.

18 My wife's family's been a Duke ratepayer since
19 Duke's creation in 1924. I've been a Duke
20 ratepayer for the past 40 years. However, the Duke
21 Energy rate increase request includes claims for
22 reimbursement that are disingenuous. Over the past
23 40 years, I've paid Duke for its fuel costs in
24 operating its coal-fired electric generating
25 plants. That fuel charge included the handling of

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1 the coal and the coal ash. Additionally, Duke sold
2 460,000 tons of coal ash in 2017 and, at the market
3 rate of \$24 a ton, generated \$11,040,000 in
4 additional revenue. And I'm sure that Duke's 2018
5 financials, when they're released, will show the
6 same amount of coal ash being sold to cement
7 companies. Yes, coal ash can be used by cement
8 companies across the country, and someone at Duke
9 can find other uses for this coal ash and other
10 buyers. So the claim for \$63 million in
11 reimbursement for disposing of coal ash is very
12 disingenuous, and I don't know who would dream that
13 up.

14 By the way, Duke owns its own coal mine and
15 still operates 13 coal-fired electric generating
16 plants, making it the 43rd most polluted company in
17 the United States of America.

18 Additionally, Duke owns four real estate
19 subsidiary companies, but they don't disclose real
20 estate values of these subsidiaries. I would urge
21 the PSC Staff to have Duke sell off the real estate
22 assets owned by these real estate subsidiaries
23 before you grant any increases in rates.

24 Lastly, not one Duke ratepayer from South
25 Carolina was present in Duke's boardroom when the

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1 decision was made to invest \$125 million in the Lee
2 nuclear station. The construction of this station
3 was abruptly stopped by Duke. This is very similar
4 to SCE&G and Santee Cooper's stopping construction
5 on its nuclear power plants in Fairfield County.

6 The question is, for this entire audience and
7 South Carolinians is, should the South Carolina
8 Attorney General conduct an investigation into
9 Duke's handling of this matter?

10 **VOICE:** Yeah.

11 [Applause]

12 **WITNESS:** Duke's the one that brought it up.
13 Why shouldn't we send them to the South Carolina
14 Attorney General to say, "I want you to look into
15 this matter since Duke is asking for \$125 million
16 dollars of it."

17 Lastly, Andy Stanley said, "Leaders who don't
18 listen will eventually be surrounded by people who
19 have nothing to say." Thank you, very much.

20 [Applause]

21 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you, Mr. Fitzgerald.

22 Any questions from the parties?

23 [No response]

24 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Commissioners?

25 [No response]

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1 Thank you.

2 [Witness excused]

3 **MR. NELSON:** I do have something, Mr.
4 Chairman, before we get to the next witness. Mr.
5 Fitzgerald gave me a copy of this letter
6 [indicating]? I don't know if y'all received one,
7 too, but I'd like to ask it to be entered into the
8 record as the next hearing exhibit.

9 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Okay. We will enter it
10 into the record as Hearing Exhibit No. 7.

11 [WHEREUPON, Hearing Exhibit No. 7 was
12 marked and received in evidence.]

13 **MR. NELSON:** And I'd like to do – while we're
14 on that topic, Mr. Chairman, if I could, I would
15 like the sign-in sheets from tonight's hearing
16 placed into the record as a hearing exhibit.

17 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Okay. Those sign-in sheets
18 from tonight will be entered in the record as
19 Hearing Exhibit No. 8.

20 [Witness affirmed]

21 THEREUPON came,

22 **J A M E S B E L S O N ,**
23 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

24 **WITNESS:** I'm James Belson. I live at 604
25 Canterbury Road, Piedmont.

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1 What I wanted to speak to tonight was the
2 upfront charge, the charge they want to raise from
3 eight dollars and so many cents to twenty-eight.
4 What that actually means is they're charging you
5 what used to be \$100 a year just to be hooked up,
6 to \$330 a year just to hook up to their lines, even
7 before you use any power.

8 This seems to me to be the point of
9 criminality, to be honest with you, because, I
10 mean, I can understand why there's a fee to be
11 hooked up and I need to have that available. But
12 250 percent increase seems like usury to me.

13 **VOICE:** Yeah.

14 **WITNESS:** And I just wanted to let you hear
15 the exact nuts-and-bolts of what that means; \$330 a
16 year is the amount of money that's probably one,
17 two, or maybe three months' bills, so you're paying
18 for two months' bills of electric before you use
19 any. Now, I don't mind maybe a \$1-\$2 raise, but a
20 \$20 raise to \$28 a year is just way beyond the
21 pale. And it really hurts me, because I'm on –
22 again, retired Air Force, and fixed income and all
23 that stuff. And I even put solar on my house, to
24 be a good steward of the world's resources and
25 maybe to save a little money. Well, it's not

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1 saving any money, but I am helping by not using too
2 much power. But that's adding \$330 a year to my
3 power bill, and I just think that's ridiculous.
4 And that's all I really have to say. And thanks
5 for your attention, by the way.

6 [Applause]

7 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you, Mr. Belson.
8 Hang on right there, just in case we've got any
9 questions from the parties.

10 **MR. NELSON:** No questions.

11 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Commissioners, any
12 questions?

13 **VICE CHAIRMAN WILLIAMS:** One quick question,
14 Mr. Chairman.

15 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Commissioner Williams.

16 **EXAMINATION**

17 **BY VICE CHAIRMAN WILLIAMS:**

18 **Q** Sir, would you install solar if you had to do it all
19 over again and this rate increase was proposed, or was
20 adopted as proposed, would you still invest in solar?

21 **A** I have to say yes, because I believe in taking care of
22 the planet – even though I'm not a crazy person.

23 [Laughter]

24 But I probably wouldn't do it, because it's
25 actually costing me more. And that's because of the

1 mistake I made, leasing it, rather than buying it. So,
2 but you live and learn.

3 **Q** Thank you, sir.

4 **A** But I am glad that I'm helping the planet some, at
5 least.

6 **Q** Thank you, sir.

7 **A** Sure.

8 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you, Mr. Belson.

9 [Witness excused]

10 [Witness affirmed]

11 THEREUPON came,

12 **P A T R I C K C O B B ,**

13 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

14 **WITNESS:** Good evening. My name is Patrick
15 Cobb. 1 Chestnut Woods Court, in Columbia, 29212.
16 And I work for AARP South Carolina, a nonprofit
17 organization with 625,000 members here in the
18 Palmetto State, and it includes more than 150,000
19 Duke Energy customers here in the upstate.

20 First, I'd like to thank the Public Service
21 Commission for honoring AARP's request to hold
22 these night hearings here in the upstate this week,
23 and also I'd like to thank the Office of Regulatory
24 Staff for the work they do on behalf of consumers
25 in South Carolina.

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1 And Commissioner Ervin, I'd like to answer
2 your question that AARP on Tuesday launched a
3 campaign to take on Pharma.

4 **COMMISSIONER ERVIN:** Great.

5 **WITNESS:** AARP strongly opposes increasing
6 basic facility charges.

7 I'd like to present a fact that hasn't been
8 presented in the last three meetings about basic
9 facility charges. As a condition of the recently
10 completed SCANA/Dominion merger, a PSC order
11 reduced SCE&G's basic facility charge from \$10 to
12 \$9, and it's prominently displayed on my bill every
13 month. Duke's request to increase its basic
14 facility charge from eight dollars and some change
15 to \$28 is basically troublesome. It won't matter
16 how many people are in the household. It won't
17 matter what your income is, how old you are, or how
18 you try to conserve energy to lower your bills.
19 The basic facility charge is a mandatory fee that
20 will hurt the budget of every residential ratepayer
21 in more ways than one.

22 This proposed increase will especially harm
23 low-use customers, a majority of seniors, renters,
24 energy conservers, and low-income customers.
25 Typically, seniors, renters, and low-income

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1 ratepayers use less electricity and can least
2 afford the costly changes.

3 The average Social Security beneficiary in
4 South Carolina receives a monthly check of \$1400.
5 For two in five, that is their sole source of
6 income. Normally, customers can manage their
7 utility bills by controlling how much power they
8 use. Less power equals a lower power bill. If
9 ratepayers are smart and thrifty, they're rewarded
10 with a lower power bill. A high mandatory fee
11 throws this opportunity for savings out the window,
12 severely limiting a customer's choice and freedom
13 to control their energy costs and lower their
14 energy bills. High mandatory fees rig the game in
15 favor of utilities by keeping customers chained to
16 the power company. Ratepayers who have made
17 efforts and saved through energy efficiency
18 measures, replacing lightbulbs, insulating their
19 home, or installing solar panels won't see the same
20 savings with these mandatory fee portions, if
21 they're enacted. People that have done all the
22 right things to save on their bills will actually
23 be punished, rather than rewarded. Thank you.

24 **VOICE:** All right.

25 [Applause]

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1 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you, Mr. Cobb.

2 Any questions from the parties?

3 **MR. NELSON:** I don't have any questions, Mr.
4 Cobb, but thank you, and thank you for your
5 organization in getting –

6 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Commissioner –

7 **MR. NELSON:** – some of these people out.

8 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Commissioner Ervin.

9 **COMMISSIONER ERVIN:** Thank you.

10 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Sorry.

11 **EXAMINATION**

12 **BY COMMISSIONER ERVIN:**

13 **Q** Patrick, I did want to thank you and the members of AARP
14 for coming to the hearing, and being part of our hearing
15 next week as intervenors –

16 **A** We're actually not an intervenor.

17 **Q** Or, you're not this time?

18 **A** Not this time.

19 **Q** You were last time.

20 **A** Right, sir.

21 **Q** Well, you were very valuable to us when we had the SCE&G
22 hearings –

23 **A** Thank you.

24 **Q** – as a resource, and I know that a lot of your members
25 were at the hearing in Spartanburg on Tuesday night, and

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again last night in Anderson. So, I know it's a great concern to your membership. I commend you on your efforts to weigh in on the this support of public policy decision, and – don't – I have one just quick question for you. Don't you think it's somewhat hypocritical for Duke Energy to say that "We're going green," and then turn around and punish people who have gotten solar panels? Turn around and punish people that weatherize their homes?

[Applause]

A Well, anyone who's done anything to make their home more energy efficient – I know that we've done that at my house, and luckily my home is energy efficient, and we – you know, I have two children, or grown children, and, you know, our lights go all the time, and so we – and we're flipping lights off. I learned that from my father: You turn that light off if you're not in that room.

VOICE: That's right. Yeah.

BY COMMISSIONER ERVIN:

Q And so, the effect of going up on the base fee, just to have service before you even flip the switch, really, is like you give them incentives to winterize and buy solar, and then you take it away with the other hand.

A Exactly.

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1 Q That's hypocritical, don't you think?

2 A Exactly. The folks who've done the right things are
3 being punished.

4 Q They're being punished.

5 VOICE: Right.

6 BY COMMISSIONER ERVIN:

7 Q And then, the other thing, of course, is it has an
8 inordinate impact on the elderly, people on fixed
9 incomes, or who only have maybe Social Security to live
10 on.

11 A Right.

12 Q And, of course, that's a great concern, too, because
13 they're impacted disproportionately much more than a
14 person that's still working and has a regular income
15 and, hopefully, a chance of making more money.

16 A Correct.

17 Q So we appreciate you weighing in, and thank you for your
18 attention.

19 A Thank you, very much. I appreciate it.

20 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you. Any other
21 Commissioner questions?

22 [No response]

23 Okay.

24 [Witness excused]

25 Ladies and gentlemen, one of the things about

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1 these hearings is Ms. Jo Wheat has to say
2 everything that is said, repeat everything that's
3 said, and her voice gets worn out, so we take a
4 little break about every hour and 10 minutes. So,
5 we're going to take about a 10-minute break for Ms.
6 Wheat.

7 **COMMISSIONER ERVIN:** Mr. Chairman.

8 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Yes.

9 **COMMISSIONER ERVIN:** Before we take that
10 break, we did something at the other two hearings
11 I'd like to see if we can repeat tonight. The
12 Public Service Commission, under the leadership of
13 our Chairman, Mr. Randall, has started a new
14 website and a new Facebook page. So I want to ask
15 our public service employee to slowly speak that,
16 so you can make a note of it. You can actually
17 follow the hearings next week. They're going to be
18 streamed live on the web, and you can watch the
19 hearings as they proceed, if you'd like to watch.

20 So give them that information very slowly, so
21 they can write it down.

22 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you, Mr. Bockman.

23 **MR. BOCKMAN:** Thank you all. And thank you
24 all for being here. My name is Rob Bockman. I'm
25 the public information director with public service

1 of South Carolina.

2 We do have several social media profiles that
3 I encourage everyone to follow, if they have
4 questions or concerns or would like up-to-the-
5 moment information or any of their questions
6 addressed. The Public Service Commission has one
7 on Facebook; that's [Public Service Commission of](#)
8 [South Carolina](#). We also have sort of a consumer-
9 focused educational platform on Facebook; that's [SC](#)
10 [Utility Consumer](#). And each of those also has an
11 attendant Twitter profile, so please do follow us
12 [@UtilityConsumer](#) on Twitter. That's
13 [@UtilityConsumer](#). Or [@PSCofSC](#) on Twitter.

14 In addition to that, as the Chairman said, we
15 do livestream our meetings through the website.
16 That portal is <https://psc.sc.gov/>.

17 We have a question. Yes, sir.

18 **VOICE:** [Inaudible] for all of them?

19 **MR. BOCKMAN:** Absolutely. It's
20 <https://psc.sc.gov/>. Through there, you can see
21 any of the dockets, through our Document Management
22 System, as well as livestreamed meetings through a
23 partnership with SCETV.

24 Tonight we have started doing something where
25 you can now view all the materials that have been

1 filed directly through the Docket Management System
2 by finding the URL at bit.ly/Duke hearings. That's
3 bit.ly/Duke hearings.

4 I will be around this afternoon – or evening.
5 I will be out in the lobby if you have any
6 questions about those. So please do come find me
7 if you have concerns. Thank you.

8 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you, Mr. Bockman.

9 Okay. We'll take a short break and we'll be
10 back in about – just a few minutes.

11 [WHEREUPON, a recess was taken from 7:15
12 to 7:26 p.m.]

13 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Ladies and gentlemen, if
14 everybody would get to your seat, please. If we
15 can get everyone to take your seat, please, we'll
16 come to order so we can call our next witnesses.

17 **MR. DONG:** I'm going to give three more
18 names: Trina Burton, John Unkefer, and Charles
19 Adams.

20 **MR. NELSON:** Mr. Chairman, if I could
21 interrupt a moment, please, sir?

22 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Mr. Nelson.

23 **MR. NELSON:** Dr. Arden handed me a copy of his
24 statement he had read previously, and I don't
25 believe that that was entered in the record. I

1 would like this in the record as the next hearing
2 exhibit, please.

3 **MR. DONG:** I had inadvertently skipped a
4 number, so we're going to make that Hearing Exhibit
5 No. 6, for Dr. Arden.

6 [WHEREUPON, Hearing Exhibit No. 6 was
7 marked and received in evidence.]

8 [Witness affirmed]

9 THEREUPON came,

10 **T R I N A B U R T O N ,**
11 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

12 **WITNESS:** I am Ratepayer Trina Burton. I
13 reside at 736 Crestfield Road. My Senator is Karl
14 Allen. I don't know if he's still here, but he was
15 here earlier.

16 I read up on some of the information in
17 regards to the article with Duke Power and the rate
18 increase, and one thing that concerned me is I'm a
19 single parent; I'm at home from 8:30 to 5:30. The
20 last two months I have kicked out over \$2000 to
21 Duke Power. Correct. If I had time to bring my
22 bill, I would have, but I came straight from my job
23 [indicating] because this was imperative and
24 important to me to be here so that I could voice my
25 opinion.

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1 One of the things that disturbed me in reading
2 some of the article in regards to why Duke Power
3 feels it's warranted and validated to increase the
4 rate was that there was an abandoned nuclear power
5 plant – I'm not sure if it's in Seneca, Saluda;
6 forgive me if I misspeak in regards to where it's
7 located – that is abandoned. And if I understood
8 it correctly, they want the taxpayers, the
9 consumers, to pay to have this shut down or torn
10 down, and I don't understand how you can justify
11 asking taxpayers or the consumers to take care of
12 something that you guys should be taking care of.

13 I work for a Fortune 500 company in the
14 automobile industry, and when we went through the
15 small depression we had where folks weren't buying
16 cars and the government did the bailout, my
17 company, Ford Credit, was one of the ones that
18 didn't do the bail-out. You know why? Because
19 they found ways withinside of our company to cut
20 back on things. We didn't get merit increases, we
21 didn't get raises, we didn't get bonuses. And that
22 was because those were things that we could do
23 internally to offset the government having to bail
24 us out.

25 I believe, at this time, Duke Power needs to

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1 reassess their plans, their budgets, the monies
2 that are coming in, and they find a way to resolve
3 this issue with this nuclear plant and not have us
4 pay for it. I think it's ridiculous and it's
5 absurd.

6 [Applause]

7 I took time off of my second job to be here,
8 and I'm almost an hour late, because this was that
9 important to me. I cannot survive paying Duke
10 Power those type of bills. I have other bills to
11 pay – my mortgage is not as much as my Duke Power.
12 It's ridiculous. It's ridiculous, and I hope that
13 you take this very serious, with all the people in
14 here and outside of here, and know that we don't
15 agree with this and it's not justifiable or
16 warranted. They need to do some background in
17 their business and figure out ways to cut money in
18 their industry to take care of those type of
19 things. We shouldn't be responsible for that.

20 [Applause]

21 Thank you for your time.

22 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Hang on one second.

23 Any questions from the parties?

24 [No response]

25 Commissioners, any questions?

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EXAMINATION**BY COMMISSIONER ERVIN:**

Q I have a question for you: Is it possible that you could save these bills and have them reviewed by the Office of Regulatory Staff? Because that just sounds unconscionable and unreasonable.

A I wish I could've brought them, but also –

Q Yeah, can you – can you get his address and –

A Sure.

Q – fax them or e-mail them?

A Sure. And to piggyback off of what a gentleman said earlier about an hour ago, I do have now a smart box, and now I'm starting to have a concern about that, because I –

Q When did they give you that?

A – got it recently, and now here we are, the –

Q Right.

A – rate – you know, of the price increase on my bill.

Q And the final question I have for you is you brought up an important point, and I think it's just common sense. If a utility, a publicly owned utility, decides to build a nuclear plant and then they abandon it –

A Yes, sir.

Q – and they don't ever put it in use, do you think it's fair for the ratepayers to have to pay for it?

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1 **A** Absolutely not.

2 **VOICES:** No.

3 **WITNESS:** I think Duke Power should find a way
4 to deal with that entity on their own and not
5 involve us, because your rates are enough now,
6 where they're astronomical. You should be able to
7 do anything you need to with that plant, without a
8 rate increase.

9 **BY COMMISSIONER ERVIN:**

10 **Q** Well, that brings up one more point I want to ask you.
11 If they decide that they want to pollute the environment
12 and put coal ash out in a pond next to the river, in
13 violation of the Clean Water Act, and then they find out
14 they have to remove it, do you think the ratepayers
15 should have to pay for that?

16 **A** Absolutely not.

17 **VOICES:** No.

18 **WITNESS:** Absolutely not. That should not –
19 again, when I worked – I still work for this
20 Fortune 500 company [indicating]. We – or, our
21 company did the necessary things to be able to
22 still survive in our industry when it was at a bad
23 time for the automobile industry. I work for Ford
24 Credit. Been there 12 years. And it should be no
25 different, where they need to maybe review and

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reassess on their end.

BY COMMISSIONER ERVIN:

Q Well, I want to thank you for coming tonight, and I'm sorry you had to be late for work.

A That's –

Q But it's –

A – okay.

Q – important to –

A It was well worth it.

Q – hear your voice, and I appreciate you being here.

A Thank you.

[Applause]

CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Hold on a second for me –

[indicating].

[Witness excused]

[Witness affirmed]

THEREUPON came,

J O H N W . U N K E F E R ,

who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

WITNESS: I want to give one of these to each one of the members, please [indicating].

MR. RICHARDSON: [Indicating.]

[Document distributed]

WITNESS: These are financial – some financial statements from their 10-k for 2018.

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1 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** We need for you to say your
2 name and address first.

3 **WITNESS:** My name is John Unkefer, U-n-k-e-f-
4 e-r.

5 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you.

6 **WITNESS:** 300 Redspire Drive, Greenville.

7 The first two pages – first three pages are
8 the letter from the president of Duke Energy South
9 Carolina. He says there's 760,000 customers. On
10 the third page, Duke Energy Carolinas, on the
11 webpage, or another page that I've got, says
12 there's 591,000 customers. He also brings up
13 numerous times in his letter that it says, "A bill
14 for a customer with an average usage should stay
15 the same." As all these people are saying, the
16 majority are not average users, and so they are
17 going to be hitting a lot bigger power bill, if
18 that goes through.

19 The third page, again, they said that the
20 residential rate was going to go up 12.1 percent.
21 They calculated that wrong; it's actually 13.67
22 percent. They divided by the end product, not the
23 base product. And you'll see my calculation there.
24 So just so you know that it's 13.67, not 12.1.

25 My position through most of my years was vice

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1 president and controller of a major coated paper
2 company. And so this is why I'm doing it
3 financialwise. I did the same thing four years
4 ago, when we did this, and I said then that Duke
5 Carolinas is the cash cow of the company, and it
6 still is, and that's what I'm going to show you.

7 The first page on the rates is "Current
8 Utility Rates" by each individual subsidiary.
9 You'll note that North Carolina is .087 cents.
10 South Carolina, meaning us, is at 10.7 – 10.1 right
11 now, and they want to raise it 9½ cents, so we'd
12 actually be up at 11.6 cents.

13 Also, Energy Progress and Energy North
14 Carolina and South Carolina are both at 10.8 cents
15 and 11.4 cents. So it tells me that North
16 Carolina, which is part of us, is one of the lowest
17 rates of anybody, at .087 cents. And strangely
18 enough, Duke Energy's headquarters is in Charlotte,
19 which includes that area.

20 Page two is "Return on Investment by Utility."
21 And, again, you can see what the revenues are by
22 each one of the subsidiaries and the net income.
23 And the first one is us, meaning the whole group,
24 North and South Carolina. The net income percent
25 to revenue was –

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[3-minute alarm]

– 14.7 percent. Everybody else is anywhere from 9 to 12 percent. So it shows that we are being very good stewards and we're making a lot of money compared to the others.

The distributions/dividends that were paid to the corporation this year, in 2018, the Carolinas paid \$750 million. All of the other subsidiaries together only paid \$675 million.

The cash from operations from the Carolinas was 2½ – \$2,500,000,000. You can see all of the rest: 1.6 billion, 1.1, ½ million – or, ½ billion, and so on.

CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Mr. Unkefer. We – your three minutes is up, but we want to – can we – we'll enter this into the record, if that works for you, and we'll have it.

WITNESS: I would really like to present a little bit more, if I could, because –

CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Well, we've got to be fair to everyone –

WITNESS: – we started the clock a little early.

CHAIRMAN RANDALL: We've got to be fair to everybody. You've run way over your three minutes

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1 already, so we need to ask for questions from any
2 of the parties.

3 What number –

4 **WITNESS:** Mr. Ervin, would you ask me some
5 questions –

6 **COMMISSIONER ERVIN:** Yes, sir, I will.

7 **WITNESS:** – since you're our representative?
8 [Laughter]

9 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** That'll be Hearing Exhibit
10 No. 9.

11 [WHEREUPON, Hearing Exhibit No. 9 was
12 marked and received in evidence.]

13 **COMMISSIONER ERVIN:** Yes, sir. We're going to
14 mark this as Exhibit No. 9 – and, court reporter,
15 you'll write that down.

16 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** We've already got that over
17 here.

18 **COMMISSIONER ERVIN:** Great.

19 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you.

20 **EXAMINATION**

21 **BY COMMISSIONER ERVIN:**

22 **Q** So I'd like to ask you: What does all your research tell
23 you about how Duke Energy Carolinas is dealing with our
24 people here? Just kind of summarize it briefly for us.

25 **A** Well, first off –

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1 Q Big picture.

2 A Well, the big picture is that North Carolina has a lot
3 lower rate than we do.

4 Q They've got a better deal than we do.

5 A A lot better deal. Two cents' worth times that, you
6 know, 1000 kilowatts gets to be real money when you're
7 multiplying it by 760,000 people.

8 Q All right. Can you put it in a practical example? How
9 much better of a deal does North Carolina have, as
10 opposed to South Carolina?

11 A I can't tell you that, because there's no financial
12 statement for the South Carolina parts, so I cannot
13 split it.

14 Q Right, it's kind of combined.

15 A I can't – it's all combined.

16 Q Right. But if you had to – if you had to guesstimate,
17 based on your numbers – you've got a lot of information
18 here – how significant a difference is it? Is it just
19 fractionally different, or is it a fairly substantial
20 difference?

21 A Between North Carolina and South Carolina?

22 Q Yes.

23 A Oh, it's significantly different. It has to be. And if
24 you're taking 2 to 2½ cents more – and actually they
25 want to add another cent and a half –

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1 Q Right.

2 A – so then we're up to 3, 3½ cents

3 Q Right, so it begins to be real money –

4 A It's real money.

5 Q – is what you're saying. Yeah, okay.

6 A And I –

7 Q I appreciate you doing all this research. It's very
8 helpful, and it's now part of our official record. So
9 I'm sorry you're out of time, but we're going to look at
10 it, study it, along with all the other materials, and
11 give it due weight.

12 A Well, hopefully, you will use it this time, and because
13 it proves without a shadow of a doubt that there's no
14 reason for Duke Energy to raise South Carolina's rates
15 at this time, because on an equity basis we are at 10.8
16 percent, and they want us to be at 10 to 10½ percent.
17 So we're already there. And so there's no reason to
18 give them any rate whatsoever.

19 Now, I've highlighted all of these pages that tell
20 you the facts. And the same with the sales tax. They
21 wanted to raise the revenue for the sales tax, but they
22 don't bring up about that they get the same credit in
23 the tax expense line. So it has no impact whatsoever,
24 other than they don't get the cash part.

25 COMMISSIONER ERVIN: Thank you, John. Thank

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1 you, sir.

2 [Applause]

3 [Witness excused]

4 **MR. DONG:** Before Mr. Adams get started, I'm
5 going to ask Rick Kromka, Dianne Keller, and
6 Stephanie Priester to come forward.

7 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** And we're going to ask
8 everyone to please – I know some think they need
9 more than three minutes, but we've got a lot of
10 people that we want to hear from, and we need to be
11 fair to everybody, so that everyone can be able to
12 speak tonight.

13 [Witness affirmed]

14 THEREUPON came,

15 **C H A R L E S A D A M S ,**

16 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

17 **WITNESS:** My name is Charles Adams. 109 North
18 Warwick Road, in Greenville.

19 And I just came here – I wish I was as fluent
20 in statistics as the rest, but there's a double-
21 edged sword here. You know, they want – I
22 understand negotiations. They're going to ask for
23 XYZ and they might get half, and they'll be happy.
24 And that's the art of negotiation. But there's a
25 double-edged sword here: What they're passing on to

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1 residents, they're going to pass on to commercial.
2 Guess what? The restaurant, the gas station, the
3 man who picks up your garbage, he's going to pass
4 that on to me so I'm paying the increase for them
5 and for me. I'm middle-class America.

6 [Applause]

7 I'm retired. Where do I go to get subsidized?
8 We can't go anyplace.

9 **VOICE:** No.

10 **WITNESS:** I mean, I had an incident with
11 Greenville Hospital. You know what they said?
12 "Take a second mortgage on your house. Liquidate
13 your equity." I worked hard to build up my
14 retirement. Yes, I'll do without a vacation, I
15 will do without a nice dinner once a month, but
16 that's the cost of doing business.

17 What bothers me is – and I just want to go one
18 more step – customer service.

19 **VOICE:** Yes.

20 **WITNESS:** No. They put in this \$5 savings a
21 month to do your air-conditioning stuff? Well, it
22 blew out a circuit in my house. I went to American
23 Home Shield. They replaced – I even have the part
24 they blew out. So I wrote to Lynn Good, because,
25 you know, if you go to the top, it goes down fast.

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1 You know what I was told – back and forth in e-
2 mails, because if we say it you'd forget it. You
3 write it, you know, I'll use it against you. And
4 they said, "Well, go to our vendor. We didn't put
5 it in." No, I did not contract with your vendor.
6 And now I'm hearing about this smart box? Don't
7 come near my property.

8 [Laughter]

9 Don't come near my property, because if you
10 can't – it's like the Boeing jets. Take them out
11 of service until you perfect it.

12 **VOICE:** That's right.

13 [Applause]

14 **WITNESS:** But you're not doing anything for
15 us. You're killing us. And all their cost savings
16 – the solar panels and windows and this, okay, so
17 I'm going to use less energy? Guess what? They're
18 going to back it into me somehow.

19 **VOICE:** That's right.

20 **WITNESS:** And they're doing it now. So please
21 consider what they're providing for us, cutting
22 down all these nice trees in our neighborhoods so
23 their power lines don't get – that's just to show
24 what we're doing for you. They should've done it
25 before. So –

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1 **VOICE:** Bury the power lines.

2 **VOICE:** Yeah.

3 **VOICES:** Yeah.

4 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** [Indicating.] Please.

5 **WITNESS:** When you lose your power for 36
6 hours, you deal with it. Duke Energy don't care.

7 And that's all I have to say. But thank you
8 for the time.

9 [3-minute alarm]

10 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you, Mr. Adams.

11 **WITNESS:** It was cathartic for me.

12 [Applause]

13 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Any questions from the
14 parties?

15 [No response]

16 Commissioners?

17 [No response]

18 Thank you.

19 **WITNESS:** Oh [indicating]. Nobody has to say
20 anything, right? Good.

21 [Laughter]

22 [Witness excused]

23 [Witness affirmed]

24 <

25 <

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1 THEREUPON came,

2 R I C K K R O M K A ,

3 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

4 WITNESS: Good evening. My name is Rick
5 Kromka. I live at 1108 East Lee Road, in Taylors.

6 I've had the fortune of being able to work
7 somewhat in the power distribution. I retired as a
8 design engineer for substations, and I got to learn
9 about how these things work and how they can be
10 efficient. So it's given me the opportunity to be
11 a very good steward of what I do on saving money.
12 I have got the smart box. I have equipped my house
13 with LED lights, I have all Energy Star appliances.
14 And I have a very good bill to show for that; I've
15 been rewarded. So, obviously, with a \$20 possible
16 increase in the base charge, which has nothing to
17 do with me being a good steward, does not sit well
18 with me.

19 Due to that – electricity is not a luxury;
20 it's a necessity.

21 VOICE: That's right.

22 WITNESS: We all have to have it. We can't
23 live without it. So by adding this into the base
24 charge, it's really corporate extortion. You can't
25 do anything –

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1 **VOICE:** Amen.

2 **VOICE:** Yeah.

3 [Applause]

4 **WITNESS:** – on an individual basis. If you
5 don't use it, you've still got to pay just for the
6 luxury. And it's not a luxury.

7 Again, another issue here would be dealing
8 with the lower usage. if everyone uses less, the
9 company has to make up this revenue. They're not
10 going to get it when everybody is saving money with
11 these. As time goes on, more LEDS are being put in
12 service, more energy-efficient appliances, and then
13 they're going to have to get this back. How are
14 they going to get it back? Well, the base usage
15 charge will recover that for them. You have no
16 control, once again.

17 Moving on to other things. Investments, like
18 in that power station that was – I believe in the
19 '80s, it was put up. They chose to do this. We
20 have no input on what they chose –

21 **VOICE:** That's right, yes.

22 **WITNESS:** – to do. If I start a business and
23 I choose to expand it or make an investment, it's
24 on me. I have to eat it, whatever it is.

25 **VOICE:** Exactly.

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1 **WITNESS:** You can't say anything about that.

2 We've already talked about the generous
3 compensation packages for your CEOs and everything.
4 I would work for one-tenth of that.

5 **VOICE:** Me, too.

6 **WITNESS:** And with that kind – and I have the
7 experience in the power distribution. I've done
8 this.

9 The profit margin has also been explained as
10 being very healthy. There's no need to increase
11 that, as well.

12 I've heard both up and down on the kilowatt-
13 hours; they're going to raise or they're going to
14 reduce it. I haven't heard anything about what
15 that number is. That's still something that's in
16 the air, either way.

17 And the last issue is, it's been also
18 mentioned that there's been hurricanes and natural
19 disasters, which means they have to spend more in
20 order to make this up. Well, again, being in
21 business, you have to have contingency plans.
22 You're going to have good years and bad years. I
23 have auto insurance and I have homeowner's
24 insurance. If my roof goes, I've got to pay for
25 it. I can't – I'm not going to do a Go Fund Me

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1 page, or something.

2 [Laughter]

3 I feel responsible for my needs, and I feel
4 any company worth its salt should do that, as well.
5 And, again, being that they're a monopoly, they
6 need to be a good steward and set an example for
7 all this. We all do it each and every day. I feel
8 they should do it, as well. That's it.

9 [Applause]

10 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you, Mr. Kromka.

11 Hold on.

12 Any questions of the parties?

13 [No response]

14 Any questions, Commissioners?

15 [No response]

16 Thank you.

17 **WITNESS:** Thank you.

18 [Witness excused]

19 [Witness affirmed]

20 THEREUPON came,

21 **D I A N E K E L L E R ,**

22 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

23 **WITNESS:** My name is – first of all, thank you
24 all for listening to me. And my name is Diane
25 Keller, K-e-l-l-e r. I live at 111 McCall Street,

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1 Greenville, South Carolina.

2 And I come here, and I have two of my
3 neighbors here with me: Ms. Sullivan and Ms.
4 Abercrombie. To save time, their light bills are
5 so high that they can't even afford it.

6 And for myself, I just couldn't deal with Duke
7 Power. I have Piedmont Natural Gas for heat. I
8 even changed out my water heater to gas. I changed
9 my dryer to gas. And then, when I sit back and
10 look at the salaries that you are paying these
11 people, these people, they should be thinking on
12 how they could reduce rates and still make a
13 profit. I know if they were working for me,
14 they'd've been gone a long time ago.

15 [Laughter, applause]

16 And you are right, they will sit back and
17 figure out how they can charge me and all these
18 people that are on fixed incomes. They should be
19 looking for other ways that they could be more
20 efficient.

21 I know – my husband, he's a cancer survivor;
22 he's had a stroke. And, you know, we had a
23 comfortable retirement. Even took care of my
24 mother for 14 years. My husband lost one arm. But
25 you know what? When he got up Sunday morning to

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1 get ready to go to church, he tied his own shoe
2 with one hand. He tied his own necktie with one
3 hand. And you pay a person \$21.4 million and they
4 cannot even think of an alternative way to make
5 money, to stop ripping off people on fixed incomes.

6 [Applause]

7 Ms. Sullivan over here, Ms. Sullivan, she is
8 also a cancer survivor. Raise your hand.

9 **AUDIENCE MEMBER:** [Indicating.]

10 **WITNESS:** This woman only get \$800 a month.
11 She's living in low-income housing and cannot pay
12 her bills. And I think it's awful.

13 You know, for myself, we have a comfortable
14 income, but, you know, I wanted to send my children
15 off to college. I sent them. And my children
16 right now would help pay my bills, but it's not my
17 children's responsibility to take care of me. And
18 I don't think it's Duke Power's responsibility to
19 rip me off, either.

20 [Applause]

21 And if you can pay somebody this amount of
22 money [indicating], I just think it's ridiculous.
23 What are they doing? The only – I – you know, I
24 have to say they are geniuses, to make you pay them
25 this amount of money to rip off somebody that's

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1 making \$800 a month.

2 **VOICE:** Yeah.

3 [Applause]

4 **WITNESS:** Okay, I only have seven minutes, and
5 thank you.

6 [Applause]

7 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you, ma'am. Thank
8 you, Ms. Keller. Hang on one second; let's see if
9 people have any questions.

10 Any questions from the parties?

11 [No response]

12 Commissioners?

13 **VICE CHAIRMAN WILLIAMS:** Mr. Chairman, I have
14 one question for Ms. Keller.

15 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Ms. Keller.

16 **VICE CHAIRMAN WILLIAMS:** Ms. Keller?

17 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Ms. Keller.

18 **WITNESS:** Oh, yeah [indicating].

19 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Commissioner Williams has a
20 question for you.

21 **WITNESS:** Oh, sure.

22 **EXAMINATION**

23 **BY VICE CHAIRMAN WILLIAMS:**

24 **Q** Ms. Keller, thanks for coming out tonight. I'm from
25 District 6; I'm not from this area. So I appreciate you

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educating me on the issues in this area. You come across as very knowledgeable, and I appreciate that, again. I'm curious to know your opinion. What do you think Duke Energy is thinking regarding the rate proposal?

A I tell you what I'm thinking, and –

[Laughter]

– I'm going to say it in a nice way. But I don't understand how you can afford to pay somebody this ridiculous amount of money [indicating] and why they can't think of something else to do. You know, if I paid somebody this kind of money, they would have to do some – my granddaughter's 10 years old. I pay her \$8 an hour to work for me. But you know what? I would put her up against any administrative assistant in this building.

[Applause]

She has to earn her money. And if Duke could pay somebody this kind of money, why do they need to rip off a woman that's making \$800 a month?

VOICE: That's right.

VOICE: Yes.

VOICE: Right.

VOICE: Of her own money.

WITNESS: And don't ask me about the solar. I

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1 want to save energy. You know, I caulked up every
2 hole. You know, I put in windows. And now I'm
3 getting ready to do my floors, and everything. But
4 that solar panel, that was just another way for
5 Duke Power to rip off somebody.

6 **VOICE:** Right.

7 **VOICE:** Amen.

8 [Applause]

9 **COMMISSIONER ERVIN:** Question.

10 **WITNESS:** Any more questions?

11 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Commissioner Ervin has a
12 question.

13 **WITNESS:** That's my opinion. I can't speak
14 for anybody else, but that's what I feel.

15 **EXAMINATION**

16 **BY COMMISSIONER ERVIN:**

17 **Q** You brought up the Duke Energy CEO's salary.

18 **A** Yes.

19 **Q** And you're correct; it's \$21.4 million a year.

20 **A** That's just one of them.

21 **Q** Right. That's –

22 **A** Just one. If you look at all of them, we're talking
23 about \$35.4 million. That's – if they took those
24 salaries and give them to somebody who could really
25 think, they wouldn't need a rate increase.

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[Laughter, applause]

BY COMMISSIONER ERVIN:

Q Well, I believe somebody did the math. At our hearing last night over in Anderson, they said that came out to about \$25,000 a day?

A Well, you know what, and if somebody worked for me and they – they would come up – they would show me what they did for that \$25,000 a day.

Q And somebody else did the math, and from 2016 the CEO's total compensation was around \$10 million, and then in 2017 she went to \$21.4 million. A 55 percent increase in one year. Fifty-five percent.

VOICE: 55 percent.

COMMISSIONER ERVIN: Did any of y'all get a 55 percent pay raise last year?

VOICES: No.

WITNESS: You know, they can take that 55 percent back and then use it for that \$20 they want from all these other people.

COMMISSIONER ERVIN: Thank you, ma'am.

WITNESS: That's what I'm suggesting, okay?

CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Ms. Keller

WITNESS: Thank you.

[Applause]

CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Commissioner Howard has a

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question. Hang on, Ms. Keller. Commissioner Howard has a question.

COMMISSIONER HOWARD: I've got a couple of questions.

WITNESS: Yes.

CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Come back over to the microphone, please.

WITNESS: [Indicating.]

EXAMINATION

BY COMMISSIONER HOWARD:

Q I hope you can answer these questions, but my concern is your two neighbors, and how they pay their light bills. Do they have any assistance? How do they handle it?

A Their children. She's with her daughter, and her children help her pay her bills. Ms. Abercrombie, she will be 70 years old this year in June. She have to continue to work just to be able to pay her bills.

VOICE: My God. My God.

WITNESS: Her husband died of a heart attack, so she have all these medical bills. And so she have to continue to work. And she pulled money out of her retirement, just to help take care of her husband and pay all these medical bills. I know what that's like, because, you see, my husband had cancer, a stroke, and we had to pay for that. I

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1 didn't go out here telling other people, "You need
2 to help me." I didn't go looking for food stamps
3 or welfare. Because, you see, if God woke me up –

4 **VOICE:** That's right.

5 **WITNESS:** – this morning, he gave me
6 everything I needed to go out and get what I need.

7 **BY COMMISSIONER HOWARD:**

8 **Q** Ms. Keller, I appreciate that. But going back to your
9 neighbors, do they utilize any social services? Are
10 there any agencies in Greenville County that they go to,
11 to aid them, or are they –

12 **A** Yes. We have Ms. Sullivan getting into –

13 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** [Indicating.] Let's let her
14 speak, please.

15 **WITNESS:** – low-income housing through the
16 Greenville Housing Authority.

17 **BY COMMISSIONER HOWARD:**

18 **Q** Okay.

19 **A** Ms. Abercrombie, she make just enough money so she's not
20 eligible for nothing.

21 **VOICE:** Come on.

22 **VOICE:** That's right.

23 **VOICE:** There it is. There it is.

24 **VOICE:** That's right.

25 <

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1 **BY COMMISSIONER HOWARD:**

2 **Q** Thank you, very much. I just wanted – I guess the point
3 of my question was to make sure that she was aware of
4 the social agencies in this area that could help provide
5 her some help for her family.

6 **A** Yes, we make sure she get the help.

7 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you, Ms. Keller.

8 **COMMISSIONER ERVIN:** Ms. Keller?

9 **WITNESS:** Thank you, very much.

10 **COMMISSIONER ERVIN:** Ms. Keller, I have one
11 question for you.

12 **WITNESS:** Yes.

13 **EXAMINATION**

14 **BY COMMISSIONER ERVIN:**

15 **Q** Did I understand you to say that one of your neighbors'
16 husband died and she's still paying medical bills from
17 that?

18 **A** Well, no, see, it took her money –

19 **Q** Right.

20 **A** – to pay up those medical bills.

21 **Q** Right.

22 **A** So she cannot afford to quit work –

23 **Q** I understand.

24 **A** – because she still have bills to pay. She still have a
25 mortgage.

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1 **Q** Right. Well, she – I would – I’m not going to give
2 legal advice, but I think that if she got legal
3 representation – she could go to a legal aid, which is
4 free of charge here in Greenville County, and let them
5 see if they can’t get those bills reduced or eliminated,
6 because somebody in financial hardship like that –

7 **A** Uh-huh?

8 **Q** – they don’t need to be paying dollar-for-dollar on
9 those bills. The hospital or any other healthcare
10 provider will compromise those bills.

11 **VOICE:** That’s right. That’s what I say.

12 **BY COMMISSIONER ERVIN:**

13 **Q** But tell her to go to legal aid, and they’ll help her.
14 Okay?

15 **A** Okay. Thank you, so much.

16 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you, Ms. Keller.

17 [Applause]

18 [Witness excused]

19 **MR. DONG:** Before Ms. Priester starts –

20 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Please, everybody, so we
21 can –

22 **MR. DONG:** Before Ms. Priester starts, I’m
23 going to call three more names. Bryan Wood, Stang
24 Detesky_[sic], and Lem Hendricks, Jr. I’m sorry if I
25 mispronounced your name. I apologize.

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[Witness affirmed]

THEREUPON came,

S T E P H A N I E P R I E S T E R ,

who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Go ahead.

WITNESS: Go ahead?

CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Yes, ma'am.

WITNESS: Well, to Mr. Chairman and members of the Public Commission, public employees, and Regulatory Staff, Senator Allen –

CHAIRMAN RANDALL: And make sure we get your name.

WITNESS: My name is Stephanie Priester. I'm at 3102 Edwards Road, in Taylors.

And so I do have a prepared speech that I prepared on behalf of many, and I want be the voice for many that couldn't be here tonight. But to piggyback off what several said – and I'm so honored just to be here; thank you again for your time, for coming. But now Duke, as they said, has confirmed this increase is also to pay for an abandoned nuclear power plant in Cherokee County, and I was asking people, did they know about the nuclear power plant in Cherokee County, now that it began, and why is it our responsibility to fund

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1 what obviously they didn't ask the people if they
2 wanted to invest in anyway. You know, I understand
3 increase. I'm all for this clean energy and
4 whatever may be required of necessity to help us to
5 have a better way of electricity or whatever, but –
6 I mean, I can see a 1, a 2, a 3, maybe 4 –

7 **VOICE:** That's right.

8 **WITNESS:** – percent increase, but to jump to
9 12 percent is pretty absurd. It's not our fault
10 that they abandoned this nuclear plant. I can see
11 if people were getting a 13 percent raise in their
12 paycheck or their fixed income to accommodate this
13 increase to our cost of living. I understand also
14 in research that it's said investment in the
15 development of new generation is the cost typically
16 paid for by customers, I researched, but did Duke
17 Energy ask the customers if they wanted this plant
18 in Cherokee? If we had known we would incur the
19 cost, I'm sure many would have spoken out then, as
20 we are now, that we don't want and wasn't in need
21 of this as a necessity for quality electric
22 service.

23 Ask the investors would they be willing to pay
24 this Duke Energy rate.

25 **VOICE:** Huh-uh.

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1 **WITNESS:** If Duke Energy had a competitor, I
2 wonder what would that look like.

3 [Applause]

4 Because there's no one else with an option to
5 compare rates to. I'm sure a lot of us would
6 switch services. Duke has no competition. I feel
7 that they are able to just, you know, request rate
8 hikes, as they please, without allowing us as a
9 consumer to shop rates, and it's just not fair.

10 If approved, it's said that these new rates
11 will go into effect June 1st. But by June 1st, no
12 one, I can assure you, probably will get a raise on
13 that fixed income, and those who work paycheck-to-
14 paycheck, or small business owners won't either.
15 The struggle is real.

16 **VOICE:** Amen.

17 [Applause]

18 **WITNESS:** So many have said – so many have
19 said – and as I said, so many have said, and I
20 reached out to people and said, "What can I say on
21 your behalf? What can I say to the fact that I
22 know you can't be here?" You have elderly, those
23 that – you know, this time of night, they ain't
24 coming out to be a part of this, the –

25 **VOICE:** That's right.

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1 **WITNESS:** – ones that's really affected by
2 this. But so many have said that what we're saying
3 doesn't matter, that we will get the increase
4 anyway. Well, my prayer is that our voices will be
5 heard and communicated in such a way –

6 [Applause]

7 – that this rate increase, based on these Duke
8 Energy annual salaries, as has been said, can be
9 adjusted and come up with the difference that they
10 need to not tap into the livelihood of the people
11 that will now have to make a decision whether
12 they're going to pay their electric rates, their
13 prescription, or food, for that matter.

14 [3-minute alarm]

15 Thank you for your time and commitment, and
16 please take our concerns to the next level.

17 [Applause]

18 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you, Ms. Priester.
19 Questions from the parties?

20 **MR. NELSON:** Thank you.

21 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Commissioners?

22 [No response]

23 Thank you.

24 [Witness excused]

25 [Witness affirmed]

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1 THEREUPON came,

2 S T A N G D E L E S K Y ,

3 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

4 WITNESS: I would like to say that I –

5 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Let's get your name and
6 address the first thing, sir.

7 WITNESS: Oh. My name is Stang Delesky, and I
8 live at 30 Rivers Edge Circle, Simpsonville, South
9 Carolina.

10 And I agree with everybody that was up at this
11 podium, and I really appreciate [name inaudible] and Gene
12 Gore, what they said, and Ms. Keller. They were
13 right on with their situation.

14 And this last lady that was just before me,
15 she mentioned a good point that hasn't been
16 mentioned yet: That's deregulation. I would like
17 to see someone come in and be competitive with
18 Duke. Right now, they're a big monopoly –

19 [Applause]

20 – that's just controlling the board which is
21 us people; they're just controlling us like little
22 pawns in – you know, whatever you want to call it.
23 But, and also, if they could bring in someone, I
24 would suggest someone like maybe Dutch Shell, who
25 is the number one supplier in the world. And when

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1 all these people here – most of them mentioned that
2 they was on fixed incomes. When you come to a
3 fixed income and you cannot afford that bill, guess
4 who has to take over? The federal government.
5 They're not going to let you die out in the street.
6 But I hope the federal government gets involved in
7 this – this is how serious it's getting, if they're
8 going to have people coming out of their houses.

9 And that's about it. Oh, another thing. It
10 shows that – Lynn Good is her name. And "G" should
11 be "greed." That's the bottom line in this whole
12 situation.

13 **VOICE:** I hear ya'.

14 **WITNESS:** And it's all about the money, you
15 know?

16 **VOICE:** Amen.

17 **WITNESS:** And when you talk about they own in
18 the area in the real estate and that, that's money.
19 Now they're getting all this money, but they want
20 the lower people's money, which is us people.
21 Okay? "We want your money also, because our \$21
22 million a year ain't satisfying you," or me.

23 So that's all I basically got to say.

24 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you, Mr. Delesky.

25 **WITNESS:** It's a greedy situation.

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1 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you.

2 **WITNESS:** Oh, one last thing. Here's the big
3 one. It seems like, with all this money they're
4 making, I think their hands are in deep pockets of
5 the committees that pass and agree on not to have
6 them do such things. So I think there's a lot of
7 politicians and people out there, especially
8 utility companies, that they're putting a lot of
9 money in your pockets, not only Ms. Greed's pocket,
10 and that's why they're getting away with this
11 stuff. You got companies –

12 [Applause]

13 – like them, you got companies like Charter.
14 I mean, it's getting ridiculous. It's kind of like
15 they're dividing the nation. They want everything
16 to be divided. They want us to be –

17 **COMMISSIONER ERVIN:** Can I ask you a question?

18 **WITNESS:** Sure.

19 **EXAMINATION**

20 **BY COMMISSIONER ERVIN:**

21 **Q** Are you registered to vote?

22 **A** Yes, I am.

23 **COMMISSIONER ERVIN:** Great.

24 How many of you here are registered to vote?

25 **AUDIENCE MEMBERS:** [Indicating.]

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1 **COMMISSIONER ERVIN:** That's fantastic. The
2 power of the ballot box is real.

3 **VOICE:** Yes, it is.

4 **COMMISSIONER ERVIN:** And so not only register
5 to vote. Get your friends, family, neighbors to
6 register to vote, and vote. Turn out the vote,
7 because that is real power. And if you want to see
8 change, that's where it starts.

9 **VOICE:** That's right.

10 **WITNESS:** I agree. I agree.

11 **BY COMMISSIONER ERVIN:**

12 **Q** But you mentioned deregulation. Did you know the State
13 of Texas is deregulating their utilities?

14 **A** No, I didn't. I don't follow Texas.

15 **Q** There are several other states that are doing that. And
16 so I want us – I would like to – let me ask. I'm
17 supposed to ask a question, not make a statement. Would
18 you like to see us look at that option in South
19 Carolina?

20 **A** Definitely.

21 **VOICES:** Yeah.

22 [Applause]

23 **BY COMMISSIONER ERVIN:**

24 **Q** Because if these monopolies can't do us right and treat
25 us fairly and can't provide the services, then they

1 deserve some competition, don't you think?

2 [Applause]

3 **A** I agree.

4 **Q** Thank you, sir.

5 **A** Thank you.

6 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you.

7 [Witness excused]

8 Mr. Wood?

9 [Witness affirmed]

10 THEREUPON came,

11 **B R Y A N W O O D ,**

12 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

13 **WITNESS:** My name is Bryan Wood. I live at 36
14 Silver Meadow Lane, in Greer.

15 So I agree with all the other speakers-that-
16 were-here testimonies. I just wanted to point out
17 a couple of things that I know the other people had
18 talked about. You know, there's a 250 percent
19 increase in the base rate pay, would go from \$8 to
20 \$28, or about that. And that's without anybody
21 even turning on a light. You know, you have just
22 the meter on there. And even if you put in LED, I
23 mean, that doesn't even use a small amount of
24 energy.

25 But I just wanted to point out that in 2017

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1 Duke Energy profited \$3.1 billion. They also
2 profited, in 2018, \$2.7 billion. They actually –
3 in an article, they said that they were going to
4 use – they needed this increase so that they could
5 work on the hurricane storms and the winter storms
6 and fix repairs. So they actually need strategic
7 planning in place, because it looks like they
8 haven't been planning anything.

9 [Applause]

10 They also need a plan for fixing damaged power
11 lines, whether or not they're going to put in new
12 infrastructure and put them in the ground or not.
13 You know, we've already talked about people that
14 actually cut down trees and stuff to clear out
15 their lines. They wouldn't have to do that, if
16 they were underground.

17 So, also people had talked about being on
18 fixed incomes, so obviously that affects them. Me
19 and my wife, we work now, so, you know, just think,
20 they increase it to \$28 this year. What are they
21 gonna do for our kids five years from now? Are
22 they going to increase another \$28? Are they gonna
23 increase, you know, another \$20?

24 So for us personally, it would just affect us
25 – you know, we wouldn't go out to eat. So if we

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1 don't go out to eat then we don't pay the
2 hospitality tax for the city or the county. So
3 that doesn't benefit the small businesses, which
4 would be – you know, they would be paying the
5 increased rate, as well. So basically if they have
6 less customers, they're going to be shutting their
7 business down because they're not going to have
8 customers showing up.

9 Thank you for your time.

10 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you, Mr. Wood.

11 Any questions for Mr. Wood?

12 [No response]

13 Thank you, very much.

14 [Applause]

15 [Witness excused]

16 **MR. DONG:** I'd like to call the next
17 group: Ted Drake, Cynthia Chance, and Wayne
18 Brightman.

19 [Witness affirmed]

20 THEREUPON came,

21 **L E M H E N D R I C K S , J R . ,**

22 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

23 **WITNESS:** My name is Lem Hendricks, Jr. My
24 address is 105 Deoyley Avenue, Greenville, South
25 Carolina. ZIP 29605.

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1 I'm very concerned about Duke Power keep going
2 up and up and up. I mean, it's – it is pathetic.
3 You know, we poor people, we're on a fixed income.
4 You only can make so much, and you have nothing to
5 show for it. You know? And if they keep going up
6 \$28, it's no end. It's gotta be a stopping place
7 somewhere, because we average – you catch a person
8 that is an old person, just like she was talking a
9 few minutes ago, you know, they can't afford to pay
10 their bill and we are getting in that predicament.
11 And if you don't think you are, just keep on
12 living. Keep on living. You're gonna get there.

13 I'm at a fixed income. We all are going to
14 get there, if we keep on living. But we need the
15 love of God to straighten this out –

16 **VOICE:** Amen.

17 **WITNESS:** – because we have left it up in the
18 man's hand, and he just made a mess out of
19 everything.

20 **VOICE:** Amen. Amen.

21 **WITNESS:** Just made a mess out of it. And
22 this is the thing: We need something from a higher
23 power to guide us, to lead us, and to correct Duke
24 Power, because they just have no concern whatsoever
25 about a poor person. And all these peoples just

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1 making this big salary, pension plan, and all that
2 stuff, that's uncalled for. You can take that same
3 money and give an old person, a elderly person, a –

4 **VOICE:** Amen.

5 **WITNESS:** – sick person, and pay their bill.
6 I mean, it's just not right. And as long as we sit
7 up here and talk about it – we keep talking about
8 it. That's our problem. Talk about stuff too
9 much. We don't do nothing about it. Just sit
10 there and talk about it. Nobody seems to care to
11 have the compassion for others. We need to be
12 about our Father's vineyard.

13 **VOICE:** Amen.

14 **WITNESS:** It's something to think about. And
15 that was my concern, because everybody have more
16 bills now than they ever have had, and it's getting
17 to the point you don't get a raise. Your doctor
18 bill keep going up, gas bill going up. Everything
19 going up except what you need to go up. And Duke
20 Power, they got a place down in Charleston. They
21 didn't ask us, as a paying person, to invest in
22 that or pay that. They're not using it. Who pay
23 for it? The taxpayers. And that's a lot of money
24 to keep on for us poor people to try to pay it, and
25 you making all these other people, secretaries,

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1 billions of dollars in incentives. That's just not
2 right.

3 And I certainly do appreciate y'all giving me
4 the time to speak, and I hope somewhere that God
5 will straighten this out –

6 **VOICE:** Amen.

7 **WITNESS:** – because we're gonna make the best
8 out of it.

9 **VOICE:** Amen.

10 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you, Mr. Hendricks.
11 Questions for Mr. Hendricks?

12 [No response]

13 Commissioners?

14 [No response]

15 Thank you.

16 [Witness excused]

17 [Witness affirmed]

18 THEREUPON came,

19 **C Y N T H I A C H A S E ,**

20 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

21 **WITNESS:** Good evening. My name is Cynthia
22 Chance. I live at 33 Seyle Street, in the Dunearn
23 Mills community.

24 First I want to say that I am on a fixed
25 income – not due to my choice. I got hurt at my

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1 job, almost 20 years ago. In 20 years, my salary
2 has only gone up \$300 – in 20 years. That is a
3 shame. Cost of living is 2 percent. Look how much
4 groceries have gone up – more than 2 percent. Most
5 things are at 30, 40 percent.

6 I don't know if you guys are familiar with
7 Greenville has about 24 special-emphasis
8 neighborhoods. I live in one of them. That means
9 51 percent of the people are very poor. That means
10 we can't have an increase of this for electricity,
11 because electricity, like they said, is a
12 necessity; it's something we need in our homes.

13 I keep my heat on 66 degrees. I just this
14 year – last year, got central air-conditioning
15 because I refinanced my house, so – I couldn't take
16 the heat anymore. So I got an air conditioner that
17 cost me \$5000. Now I'm keeping it on about 80
18 degrees, just so I'm cool enough than what's
19 outside, but I'm not freezing in my house, because
20 I can't afford the electricity. Like I said, I
21 keep the heat on 66, and that's as high as I can do
22 it.

23 I tried talking to Duke Energy about getting –
24 because my check comes in on the 1st – trying to
25 get my bill moved to another date. They wouldn't

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1 do it. But I talked to a gentleman tonight and
2 they said they have something called Pick Your Own
3 Due Date, so I'm going to go ahead and change that.
4 Because when your check comes in on the 1st, and
5 it's a Saturday or Sunday, you get a late fee come
6 Monday on your power bill. It doesn't matter
7 whether it's \$1 or \$5; it's still a late bill. And
8 they would not, up until tonight, but I found out
9 that they had Pick Your Own Due Date. So I'm going
10 to change mine, so this way, when my check comes
11 in, if it's on a Saturday or Sunday, I'm not
12 getting a late fee come Monday, because that's
13 what's been happening for the last 12, 13 years. I
14 don't think that's fair to the customers, and then
15 going up on \$20.

16 So that's basically all I have say. Thank you
17 for your time.

18 [Applause]

19 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you, Ms. Chance.

20 Any questions from the parties?

21 [No response]

22 Commissioners.

23 **EXAMINATION**

24 **BY COMMISSIONER BELSER:**

25 **Q** Ms. Chance, with regard to your bill, had you contacted

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1 Duke customer service, either by phone or e-mail and
2 asked them to change your due date?

3 **A** Yes, I did, many times. And they said, because of the
4 cycle, the way they read it, they could not change it.
5 I said, "But it's going to be late every other month or
6 something," and they said, "Too bad."

7 **Q** But you contacted them and asked them.

8 **A** Yes, ma'am.

9 **Q** And nobody told you about Pick Your Own Due Date?

10 **A** Nope. The gentleman tonight just told me about it.

11 **COMMISSIONER BELSER:** Thank you, very much.

12 **WITNESS:** Thank you.

13 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you. Other
14 questions?

15 **VICE CHAIRMAN WILLIAMS:** Mr. Chairman?

16 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Commissioner Williams.

17 **EXAMINATION**

18 **BY VICE CHAIRMAN WILLIAMS:**

19 **Q** Ma'am, did you also have a late fee because of the fact
20 you couldn't pick your own due date?

21 **A** Yes, because, like I said, if the check came in on a
22 Saturday or Sunday, it doesn't get posted till Monday,
23 and the power bill was due on the 1st. So if the 1st
24 was a Saturday and the money wasn't in the bank, then it
25 was late come Monday.

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1 **Q** If you could pick your own due date, you wouldn't have
2 the late fees? Is that what you're saying?

3 **A** Right, uh-huh.

4 **VICE CHAIRMAN WILLIAMS:** Thank you.

5 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you. Thank you, Ms.
6 chance.

7 [Witness excused]

8 [Witness affirmed]

9 THEREUPON came,

10 **W A Y N E B R I G H T M A N ,**
11 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

12 **WITNESS:** My name is Wayne Brightman. I live
13 at 20 Denford Cove, Cleveland, South Carolina
14 29635.

15 For those of you who don't know, Cleveland,
16 South Carolina, that's up towards Jones Gap State
17 Park, in River Falls. We kiddingly say we have to
18 pipe in the sunshine up there.

19 It's a very rural area. And, as such,
20 electricity comes and goes. I don't know of
21 anybody in River Falls that does not have kerosene
22 lamps, because we cannot allow to be in the dark
23 until Duke decides it's gonna turn the power back
24 on because a limb or a tree has fallen on it,
25 instead of cleaning it during the off-season, as

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1 they promise.

2 That being said, my main concern is corporate
3 insensitivity. Going back on my personal finances,
4 back, right after Thanksgiving, I found myself,
5 because of the smart meters, I found myself in need
6 of going to one of these social service agencies
7 for help with my Duke Power bill. The lady I
8 talked to – her name was Ms. Williams – assured me
9 that it would be covered, there would be no
10 problem. They failed to tell me that the next day,
11 that Ms. Williams had off. And so her supervisor
12 got the commitment and did not contact Duke. Duke
13 came out. I saw the truck out there, and they
14 says, “Well, we’re here to let you know we’re gonna
15 cut the power off.” I said, “For what? I got in
16 touch with the social service agency and they...”
17 “Well, we don’t show a commitment.”

18 I said, “Give me 15 minutes. Just 15
19 minutes.” In that 15 minutes, they had me cut off.
20 That being said, we got that straightened out and
21 they were back out there within the next 15 minutes
22 and had everything back on, but they assessed me a
23 \$400 deposit for that 15 minutes.

24 Now, going to the 19th of December, we had my
25 mother-in-law move in with us, who was suffering

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1 from terminal Alzheimer's. She passed away
2 Valentine's Day. And so this has put us in a
3 situation where we have been struggling. Last
4 month – now, I'm not the most costly one here.
5 Last month, I paid \$832 to Duke Power. I just
6 received –

7 [3-minute alarm]

8 – my next bill: \$704. Something needs to be
9 done to get this into perspective.

10 Thank you for your time.

11 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you, Mr. Brightman.

12 Any questions from the parties?

13 **MR. NELSON:** I have some questions.

14 **CROSS EXAMINATION**

15 **BY MR. NELSON:**

16 **Q** Mr. Brightman, I'm going to cover a couple of areas.

17 The first one was, I was curious about the tree
18 trimming, because it sounds to me like you have a lot of
19 trees that get – are they coming down on the lines? Is
20 that right?

21 **A** Well, the River Falls community – okay? – the road going
22 down to Jones Gap State Park is – the state's supposed
23 to take care of it; DOT's supposed to take care of it.
24 But there's a lot of pine trees along there. And as you
25 know, the root system of pine trees doesn't run that

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1 deep, and so therefore, they're constantly falling over.
2 That being said, within half a mile of there, there is
3 another electric company, a co-op – Blue Ridge Co-Op,
4 okay? They can be out there and have their electricity
5 on for their customers way in advance of Duke Power, and
6 Duke knows the problem with these trees, that it is an
7 inherent problem of this area of the – what they call
8 the Dark Corner up there. They know that, but yet
9 they're not dealing with it. They're leaving it. And
10 then they want to turn around and they want a rate
11 increase? I guess I'm going to have to go to kerosene
12 lamps all the time.

13 **Q** That was my first one.

14 **A** Okay.

15 **Q** I wanted to get all that, because that sounds like an
16 unusual amount of outages.

17 **A** Yeah, but that's what it is. There's a lot of trees in
18 there.

19 **Q** The other thing is your bill, the amount of your bill.
20 How large is the residence?

21 **A** Well, it's pretty – which I didn't bring out. I live in
22 a double-wide manufactured home on a permanent
23 foundation with an attached garage. It's not going
24 anywhere. I cannot get an audit because it is a
25 manufactured home. Duke Power, by their policy, will

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1 not do an audit on a manufactured home. They will give
2 you a number of a company down in Columbia that will
3 gladly take your business and charge you for an audit,
4 but if you live in a manufactured home – which a lot of
5 low-income – people have to do because of the cost if
6 they're going to own anything, they – I mean, I do not
7 understand. A dwelling is a dwelling. An audit should
8 be something that should be able to be done regardless.
9 And this business of "Well, you live in a manufactured
10 home" – and like I said, it's on a permanent foundation;
11 it's not something that I'm going to hook up to and take
12 off. It's permanent. And that being said, the back of
13 my property is the high line.

14 **Q** So, that's – you've got a double-wide and your bill was
15 \$832 one month –

16 **A** Yes.

17 **Q** – and \$704 dollars?

18 **A** And I just got billed \$700, yes. And like I said,
19 that's – I call it corporate insensitivity. I don't
20 have another word for it.

21 **Q** I don't know if we can help you, but I would greatly
22 appreciate – those bills seem extraordinarily high. If
23 you could talk to my folks, they're outside here. And
24 we can at least try and look at your bills and see if
25 there's something wrong.

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1 **A** Okay, appreciate it. Thank you.

2 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Anything else? Mr. Nelson?

3 [No response]

4 Commissioner Ervin.

5 **COMMISSIONER ERVIN:** Mr. Nelson, would you
6 look into this issue about how they get away with
7 not doing an energy audit on manufactured homes?
8 That doesn't seem fair.

9 **WITNESS:** It is the policy, they told me.

10 **COMMISSIONER ERVIN:** Yeah, but why?

11 **WITNESS:** They don't –

12 **COMMISSIONER ERVIN:** I'd like to know why.

13 **WITNESS:** It's Duke Energy. They don't have
14 to give you a reason why. They just say this is
15 the way it is.

16 **COMMISSIONER ERVIN:** They're going to have to
17 tell us why, because, you know, with the cost of
18 housing going up, up, up, more people are looking
19 to manufactured homes.

20 **WITNESS:** And my son – I'll soon be 72, so my
21 son says, "Well, Dad, I'll call down there. You
22 know, you're just getting something wrong. I'll
23 even drive you up to Charlotte to where you can
24 talk to somebody." He tried reasoning with the
25 customer service person there. He says, "Well, you

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1 don't understand." It's not like when it was down
2 on Academy Street, down here in Greenville. It's
3 diversified, and you can't talk to a person up
4 there. You've got to handle it all by phone.

5 **COMMISSIONER ERVIN:** We've heard that before,
6 yeah.

7 **WITNESS:** And the Internet does not exist up
8 where we're at. I don't have Internet.

9 **COMMISSIONER ERVIN:** Well, I appreciate you
10 calling it to our attention. We're certainly going
11 to look into it. Thank you, sir.

12 **WITNESS:** I appreciate it. Thank you.

13 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you.

14 **VICE CHAIRMAN WILLIAMS:** Mr. Chairman, I've
15 got one question for the gentleman.

16 **EXAMINATION**

17 **BY VICE CHAIRMAN WILLIAMS:**

18 **Q** Could you tell me the timeline for your service being
19 disconnected and you receiving – I guess it's a
20 mandatory \$400 deposit? I'm just – I'm having a little
21 trouble understanding that timeline.

22 **A** Okay. As a said, the power was cut off at the beginning
23 of December.

24 **Q** In the wintertime? Wintertime, right?

25 **A** Wintertime. And like I said, I got it turned on –

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1 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** [Indicating.] Please let
2 Mr. Brightman speak.

3 **WITNESS:** I'm sorry, I was trying to answer
4 your question, and the lady over here was signaling
5 me that I need to slow down. I'm sorry. I'm a
6 Yankee; I talk fast. But that being said, by the
7 end of December we received the \$800 bill. I have
8 recently, like the other lady, have found out about
9 the Pick Your Date, because I'm on a fixed income.
10 And my due date was the 24th of the month. So, for
11 people on a fixed income, their due dates versus
12 our income don't match.

13 **BY VICE CHAIRMAN WILLIAMS:**

14 **Q** Right, I understand, sir, but I want to believe I
15 understood you to say that you are charged a \$400
16 deposit or something like that?

17 **A** Yes. A \$400 deposit, and they will not – they will not
18 let you pay that out over a period of time.

19 **Q** Was that because your energy was cut off for 15 minutes?

20 **A** Yes, sir. They said that was the equivalent of what
21 they consider two months' service, and so that's what
22 they used as the basis for that. And they said, now, if
23 I pay on time for six months, then they'll see about
24 giving me back my \$400. In the meantime, as I said,
25 I've got that, as well as the additional bill and all

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1 that, and I don't know where this money supposed to come
2 from.

3 **VICE CHAIRMAN WILLIAMS:** Thank you, sir.
4 Thank you.

5 [Witness excused]

6 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Before Mr. Drake comes
7 forward, I'm going to call three more names. It
8 looks like Traci Fant? Is that right? Henry
9 Sherred, and Efia Nwambaza.

10 [Witness affirmed]

11 THEREUPON came,

12 **T H E O D O R E D R A K E ,**
13 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

14 **WITNESS:** my name is Ted Drake. I live at 813
15 Swallow Drive, Fountain Inn, South Carolina.

16 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** [Indicating.] Let's
17 everybody please be quiet while Mr. Drake speaks,
18 so we can hear him.

19 **WITNESS:** I came here tonight under a
20 misconception. I came here to talk to Duke Energy,
21 to find out exactly why they think they need a
22 raise. I've heard here that they wanted to take
23 care of their nuclear plant that they made a
24 mistake in doing.

25 I've been in several businesses, and if I made

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1 a mistake in business, I had to pay for it. I
2 think Duke should do the same thing.

3 [Applause]

4 You gentlemen have a lot of decisions to make
5 for us, because you work for us.

6 **VOICE:** Amen.

7 **WITNESS:** You've heard a lot of information
8 tonight. We've all heard it. And it's a lot about
9 low income, but it's about everybody's income. I
10 am on a fixed income, and what sparked my interest
11 a little bit was I'm not the only one that had the
12 meter changed and had a super-increase in my bill.

13 [Applause]

14 I'm talking about like a \$200 a month upgrade
15 in my bill, that I'd been paying for a lot of years
16 with no increase like that. Now I understand that
17 it's a good thing for them to be able to read their
18 meters without sending somebody out to look at
19 them. So technology is great, but it concerns me
20 that maybe it isn't great enough.

21 I had to – I had a wife, you know, earlier,
22 that died from Alzheimer's. And I spent 16 years
23 taking care of her, and went broke a couple of
24 times. I am – I am 79 years old right now, and I'm
25 still working because of that, and I'm on a fixed

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1 income, but I do, you know, odd jobs here and
2 there. I just don't understand how they can want
3 an increase. They've had their structure for many,
4 many years. They have to keep it up, yes, I
5 understand that, but that's what the rate is for.
6 I don't see any major problem that they've had in
7 many years. And if there's a storm, they get
8 subsidized by the government a lot. I don't get
9 subsidized by the government.

10 I just wanted to ask them why they wanted the
11 increase and why they thought that we can pay it,
12 under the circumstances. That's all I got to say.

13 [Applause]

14 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you, Mr. Drake.

15 Any questions for Mr. Drake?

16 **COMMISSIONER ERVIN:** Mr. Drake? Mr. Drake?

17 **WITNESS:** Yes.

18 **COMMISSIONER ERVIN:** We're going to ask those
19 questions for you, beginning next Thursday at our
20 hearing.

21 **WITNESS:** I certainly hope so, gentlemen.

22 **COMMISSIONER ERVIN:** You can count on a lot of
23 questions, and we're going to be looking for some
24 answers.

25 **WITNESS:** Well, thank you, very much.

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1 [Applause]

2 [Witness excused]

3 [Witness affirmed]

4 THEREUPON came,

5 H E N R Y S H E R R E D ,

6 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

7 WITNESS: My name is Henry Sherred. 7 Boyce
8 Street, Piedmont, South Carolina 29673.

9 My complaint is Duke, when I had one of those
10 smart boxes, too – but, when they put it on, my
11 bill went up to \$300. It had been – it'd been
12 being about \$115, something like that. There ain't
13 but two people in my house, that's me and my wife.
14 But the bills come out and it's like my whole
15 family's there –

16 [Laughter]

17 – but they're not. But what I'm concerned
18 about, how can they do it when they don't come and
19 read the meter? When that smart box got broke,
20 when I had to change my heating system, they took
21 the smart box off, and I told him to leave it off –
22 the guy that put it on. I told him just leave that
23 off. The light bill went down. But Duke came back
24 and walked around the house, and when I got my bill
25 back again, it was \$279. I called them up and

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1 asked them why was it like that. They said because
2 it was the old bill, that I could – they go back
3 and look at the bill from last year or last month
4 or the month before then, when it was up that high.
5 That's when I had my family with me, so the bill
6 was higher. Had five or six people and kids. They
7 take showers, so, hey. But now ain't nobody but me
8 and my wife, and I don't see how in the world could
9 it be \$178, \$179 dollars every month. And we don't
10 need that much when we go to our daughter's in
11 Atlanta. We like to go down there and visit, stay
12 for a couple of days or a week. But when we come
13 back, the light bill is down? And, no, it's not.
14 And, hey, we don't have no – nobody – in the
15 summertime, like now, it's high. We don't have the
16 heat on. There ain't no heat on, because we sit on
17 the porch. But when you get the bill, it's gonna
18 be sky high, and we can't afford that.

19 I even had to go to my neighbors to get my –
20 I've got asthma and all that stuff, COPD, and I
21 couldn't get my medicine. I had to go to my friend
22 and get them to let me borrow some of their
23 medicine, so I could get that paid. And I mean, I
24 just – it's hard. I mean, I know Duke Power, they
25 got their reasons, or whatever, but they're killing

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1 us. Hey, people need –

2 [Applause]

3 And I'm on fixed income, too. My wife right
4 now, she's over there at the hospital. When I
5 leave here, I'm going over there to go pick her up.
6 But we need help. We all need help, I'm sure.

7 **VOICE:** Yes.

8 **WITNESS:** And Duke ain't helping us from our
9 dying.

10 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you, Mr. Sharred.
11 Are there questions from the parties?

12 **COMMISSIONER ERVIN:** Mr. Chairman?

13 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Commissioner Ervin.

14 **EXAMINATION**

15 **BY COMMISSIONER ERVIN:**

16 **Q** You can go to the Greenville Free Medical Clinic out
17 here in Grove Road. They do a great job, and they might
18 be able to give you an inhaler for your asthma or COPD?

19 **A** Yeah.

20 **Q** And if you haven't been there before, take a photo ID
21 with you and get enrolled, because they can help you
22 with prescription medications, too.

23 **A** That's on Grove Road?

24 **Q** Yes, sir. Free Medical Clinic. Greenville Free Medical
25 Clinic.

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1 A All right. I appreciate it.

2 COMMISSIONER ERVIN: Yes, sir.

3 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Hang on just a second. Mr.
4 Nelson –

5 MR. NELSON: I have one question, sir.

6 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: – has a question.

7 CROSS EXAMINATION

8 BY MR. NELSON:

9 Q You were talking about how much that bill was, you were
10 running almost \$300 a month now? What size house is it
11 that you have?

12 A It's a three-bedroom, but if there ain't nobody there,
13 we just need one room and that's me and my wife. We're
14 not there that much.

15 Q So you're not running the washer and the dryer?

16 A No, we're not there that much and doing that but maybe
17 once a month.

18 Q All right. Thank you, sir. I appreciate your
19 testimony. Thank you.

20 A Thank you. All right.

21 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Mr. Sharred.

22 COMMISSIONER ERVIN: And I gave you bad
23 directions. That's on West Faris. It's right
24 behind the main hospital, on West Faris.

25 WITNESS: Okay. Yeah, yeah. Okay. Thank

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1 you.

2 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you.

3 [Witness excused]

4 [Witness affirmed]

5 THEREUPON came,

6 **E F I A N W A N B A Z A ,**

7 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

8 **WITNESS:** I'm a ratepayer. Efia Nwanbaza.

9 202 Lavinia Avenue, Greenville, South Carolina.

10 You know, we should not have to be reduced to
11 beggars –

12 [Applause]

13 **VOICE:** Amen.

14 **WITNESS:** – in order to have access to a
15 public utility. It's about time that "public" get
16 put back into "utility" and that the citizens own
17 necessary services, including Duke Power.

18 **VOICE:** Amen.

19 [Applause]

20 **WITNESS:** I've been here before. I was here
21 the last time. And the Public Service Commission
22 threw the citizens under the bus. I don't know
23 whether you all were here, or not, but Duke Power
24 got its raise, and I suspect it will get one this
25 time, as well.

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1 **VOICE:** Better not.

2 **VOICE:** Hope not.

3 **WITNESS:** I don't know – I just – I want to
4 say my reason for coming here and sitting
5 throughout this whole thing is just to make sure
6 that I understand the process for you all getting
7 to listen to us beg to not be robbed by a grifter.

8 **VOICE:** Amen.

9 **WITNESS:** That you all are elected to the
10 Commission by the folk that we elect to the General
11 Assembly. And that it is our duty to defend
12 ourselves against this lawful robbery –

13 **VOICE:** Amen.

14 **WITNESS:** – by making this issue a campaign
15 issue, and that the people we vote for, that vote
16 for you, vote for folks who are going to represent
17 the customer and not the corporation.

18 [Applause]

19 **VOICES:** Yeah.

20 **WITNESS:** That is to say that, if you give
21 Duke Power one dime, that we will remember your
22 names and the names of the people who voted for
23 you, and vote them out.

24 [Applause]

25 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you, Ms. Nwanbaza.

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Any questions?

[No response]

Any questions, Commissioners?

[No response]

Thank you, ma'am.

VICE CHAIRMAN WILLIAMS: I've got –

EXAMINATION

BY VICE CHAIRMAN WILLIAMS:

Q Ma'am, I appreciate your comments. And I'll tell you – I say this several times throughout the course of these hearings. We were in Spartanburg on Tuesday, Anderson yesterday, now in Greenville. And I'm not from this area, so I appreciate all the commentary. And I notice that several citizens, ratepayers, said that they think, despite their being here, that the rate increase was going to happen anyway.

VOICES: Uh-huh.

VOICE: All of us does.

VOICE: It better not.

VOICE: Prove us wrong.

BY VICE CHAIRMAN WILLIAMS:

Q I don't know what's going to happen, because the hearing hasn't happened yet, but what I will tell you is that I have been educated the last couple of days, and I appreciate – however you may feel – I appreciate you

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1 taking your time to come and share your perspective with
2 us. And that's for everyone that's here. I appreciate
3 that.

4 **A** Well, show your appreciation by refusing to give them a
5 raise.

6 **VOICE:** Yeah.

7 [Applause]

8 [Witness excused]

9 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Okay. Is Ms. Fant –

10 **VOICE:** Not here.

11 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** – not here? Okay, we're
12 going to take a break for Ms. Wheat, and we'll be
13 back in about 10 minutes.

14 [WHEREUPON, a recess was taken from 8:39
15 to 8:50 p.m.]

16 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** If everyone will call to
17 attention? Okay. We've got – we're on Witness 30,
18 so we have 102 signed up, so we're going to – we're
19 going to ask you to really stick to the three
20 minutes, so that everybody who wants to can speak.

21 I'm going to ask Mr. Randall Dong to call the
22 next witnesses.

23 **MR. DONG:** Okay. The next set is Lindsey
24 Jacobs, Karen Folkes, and Kersha Martin. And I'm
25 going to add a fourth one: Kirbie Crowe.

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[Witness affirmed]

THEREUPON came,

L I N D S E Y J A C O B S ,

who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

WITNESS: Hi, my name is Lindsey Jacobs. I live at 52 Glenn Street, here in Greenville.

I hadn't planned to start this way, but I am. I grew up in West Virginia; I was born and raised there, and I spent my life watching our mountains get blown to pieces for coal, and our water being poisoned to get the gas that Duke burns. And I think that – I'm not sure if anyone is here from the Southern Side neighborhood here in Greenville, but they can probably relate, because right now they're dealing with coal tar pollution that's being cleaned up in their neighborhood, because for 35 years a plant primarily owned and operated by Duke released wastewater containing coal tar into the groundwater of that black community. Duke doesn't have a lot of respect for poor communities, like West Virginia and like Southern Side. So, I wanted to get that on the record.

So, I live in a tiny – a very small house, 900 square feet. It's about 100 years old. On average, our electric bill is around \$70. And

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1 we've done all the things we're supposed to do; we
2 replaced lightbulbs, we installed a smart
3 thermostat, we have new windows, we have Energy
4 Star appliances. So we've done all the things that
5 we can afford to do to make our 100-year-old house
6 as energy efficient as possible.

7 And we're here tonight to talk about Duke
8 Energy because they want to triple the mandatory
9 fee from about \$10 to about \$30 per month. And
10 you've heard this repeatedly. I don't know if
11 anybody said tonight that would be the highest
12 mandatory monthly fee of any investor-owned utility
13 in the nation.

14 So, despite all the steps we've taken at my
15 house – because we care about the climate, we care
16 about future generations, and we care about our
17 bank account – our bill would go up. I think
18 that's strange, and, quite frankly, inequitable – I
19 think it's strange, and, quite frankly, inequitable
20 to punish those who use the least energy rather
21 than those who use the most, which leads me to my
22 next point, and I think the most important point,
23 which is, I think the proposed rate hike is unjust
24 and backward. But luckily I'm privileged enough to
25 be able to pay for it. But there are many of my

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1 neighbors who are low-income or on fixed incomes
2 and they can't pay for it – as you've heard from
3 almost every person who's come up here and
4 testified tonight.

5 Duke is currently working with folks in my
6 neighborhood to make their homes more energy
7 efficient. So they're coming into the neighborhood
8 to tell us about energy efficiency and energy
9 savings techniques, which is great – right? It
10 sounds great. And I commend them for this, but
11 ultimately – and it's good because ultimately we'll
12 consume less energy in the long run, which of
13 course is better for people and for the planet.
14 But for all intents and purposes those upgrades my
15 neighbors make won't impact the bottom line on
16 their electric bills if the base rates are tripled,
17 as proposed.

18 I think it's disingenuous of Duke not to say
19 as much when they come in a neighborhood like mine,
20 pitching this energy efficiency upgrade. I think
21 that's outrageous. It's really close to a bait-
22 and-switch, for me.

23 So I think it's really simple. Duke sees the
24 writing on the wall. As the world becomes more
25 efficient, whether it's solar energy or more

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1 efficient homes or cars, utilities are going to be
2 forced to adapt their business models. I don't
3 understand and I reject burdening those who have
4 the least ability to pay and who use the least
5 energy.

6 [3-minute alarm]

7 This proposed fee is regressive. I venture to
8 say they know that they won't get it and it's just
9 a bargaining chip for whatever it is that they're
10 after, and I oppose it.

11 [Applause]

12 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you, ma'am.

13 Any questions from the parties?

14 [No response]

15 Commissioners.

16 [No response]

17 Thank you, very much

18 [Witness excused]

19 [Witness affirmed]

20 THEREUPON came,

21 **K A R E N F O L K E S ,**

22 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

23 **WITNESS:** My name is Karen Folkes, and I live
24 at 669 Sandy Springs Road.

25 And my power bill has increased – four months,

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1 I paid \$2000 – or it has increased \$2000. Six
2 hundred [\$600] for two months, \$500, and then
3 another \$600, and over 5000 BTUs they're saying I'm
4 using. And I'm wondering if it's their box or what
5 is going on. I've been working six, seven days a
6 week to try to pay that power bill, because they
7 don't give you much time to pay. They give you two
8 payments that you can make, you know, to pay, and I
9 had \$1200 dollars and they gave me two payments,
10 and I've been working to pay it on top of my other
11 bills that I have to pay, and it has put me behind.

12 I am trying to retire. I have been saving
13 money to put aside to retire, and I cannot retire
14 having these kind of bills. You know, our
15 insurance goes up, but our medical things,
16 prescriptions and stuff, don't go up. And it's
17 hard for us who can't afford to pay those things.
18 And they don't even say, "Let me come out here and
19 look at our equipment and see if there's anything
20 going on." No, they tell you that you need to get
21 a licensed electrician to come to the house and see
22 what's going on with your power. You know, other
23 than that, after staying on the phone and talking
24 to them all these – you know, to get through to
25 somebody, they really don't have any answer for

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1 you, you know.

2 And I'm just among the many that has had high
3 bills in the last few months, that we can't afford
4 to handle. And that's the reason I'm here.

5 For the increase, I don't know what I'll do if
6 they increase it. I would really like to retire.
7 I've been working so many years.

8 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you, Ms. Folkes.

9 **WITNESS:** Thank you.

10 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Any questions for Ms.
11 Folkes?

12 [No response]

13 **WITNESS:** Thank you.

14 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you, very much.

15 [Applause]

16 [Witness excused]

17 [Witness affirmed]

18 THEREUPON came,

19 **K I R B I E C R O W E ,**

20 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

21 **WITNESS:** Hi, my name is Kirbie Crowe. I live
22 at 114 Berea Drive, 29617.

23 Duke Energy's proposed rate hike is a
24 regressive fee that unfairly burdens South
25 Carolina's most vulnerable citizens: Seniors and

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1 the disabled on fixed incomes and those already
2 struggling to make ends meet.

3 I just attended a community forum last night
4 here in the City of Greenville, regarding how the
5 lack of affordable housing in our State and County
6 is disproportionately affecting poor people of
7 color. I can safely say that the additional burden
8 of this proposed rate hike will not only be unjust
9 but positively ruinous for those in our community
10 whose budgets are already down to the bone. And
11 for what? Duke says that, quote, "Investment in
12 the development of new generation is a cost
13 typically paid for by customers," end quote. Where
14 is the new generation? Are we prepaying for it?
15 Where is the start date for the Lee nuclear
16 project, and where are the statistics showing how
17 much our bills will be lowered once it is up and
18 running? We haven't seen these details because
19 they don't exist, and I doubt very much we will
20 ever see them or see that facility get off the
21 ground.

22 I sincerely ask the Public Service Commission
23 of SC to not allow this absurd rate hike which will
24 unfairly burden so many. Thank you.

25 [Applause]

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1 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you, Ms. Crowe.

2 Questions from the parties?

3 [No response]

4 Commissioners?

5 [No response]

6 Thank you, very much.

7 [Witness excused]

8 [Witness affirmed]

9 THEREUPON came,

10 **K E R S H A M A R T I N ,**

11 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

12 **WITNESS:** My name is Kersha Martin and my
13 address is 669 Sandy Springs Road, Piedmont, South
14 Carolina 29673. Karen Folkes is my sister, and she
15 was just up here.

16 And I wanted to add that she noticed a
17 significant increase in her bill once she got the
18 Duke Power smart box. It was high already, but
19 once she got that smart box it went up. It
20 increased significantly. And also she did not
21 mention the fact that she was attempting to get
22 into the solar program, but after listening to the
23 people here and considering the rate increase, it
24 would not be beneficial to her at all to get the
25 solar panels. And I actually, myself – I live in a

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1 separate house than her on the same property. I've
2 considered the solar power option, as well. But
3 now I've listened to all the people who are here
4 tonight, I don't think I want that either, because
5 it's not going to help. I'm going to be billed
6 that rate increase, and it's going to just suck all
7 the benefit out of the solar panels.

8 And that's all I had to say. I really don't
9 think that there should be an increase, especially
10 a tripled increase. Who gets a triple increase? I
11 work in human resources; I don't give anybody a
12 triple raise.

13 [Laughter]

14 Okay? And I also want to say that the
15 salaries of the people who lead these corporations
16 – I understand it's a hard job, but no one needs
17 \$21 million to run a company. It's ridiculous.

18 **VOICE:** Amen.

19 **WITNESS:** The people at the very bottom of the
20 ladder, as was suggested earlier that, you know,
21 they should be retrained and they should be the
22 people who actually would lose their jobs, let some
23 of the people at the top lose some of that top pay.
24 They don't need all that.

25 **VOICE:** Amen.

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1 **WITNESS:** They really just don't. I mean, you
2 gonna buy another yacht? Another mansion? I mean,
3 I'm glad you can have one, but do you need two or
4 three? No. So I don't think the rate increase
5 would be fair to the people. Thank you.

6 [Applause]

7 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you, Ms. Martin.
8 Any questions from the parties?

9 [No response]

10 Thank you, ma'am.

11 [Witness excused]

12 **MR. DONG:** Okay. So, next, Mary Fowler,
13 Wallace Millard, Mark McGuffee, and Curtis Johnson.

14 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Is Mary Fowler here?

15 [No response]

16 Wallace Millard?

17 [Witness affirmed]

18 THEREUPON came,

19 **M A R Y F O W L E R ,**

20 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

21 **WITNESS:** Good evening. My name is Mary
22 Fowler. I live on 10 Codey Street, in Greenville,
23 South Carolina.

24 My concern – I've listened to everyone talk
25 about the problems and the costs, not being able to

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1 pay their bills. I'm on a fixed income myself, not
2 by choice but by a health issue. And I have had
3 problems with my Duke Power bill since they put the
4 new smart box on my house. It was starting like
5 from like \$200-and-something a month, and the next
6 month it was like \$400. Now it's almost \$800 a
7 month.

8 **VOICE:** Oh, wow.

9 **WITNESS:** And the house is not that big. But
10 it's an old house, but I have had the house
11 upgraded with a heat pump, but we don't turn the
12 heat on in the wintertime because the power will be
13 so high. So we try to heat with a wood heater.

14 And I called customer service about the
15 increase and it was stated to me that we was
16 charged by our ZIP Code and by the house next to
17 me. Well, if that's the case, I shouldn't have a
18 bill because there is no house next to me.

19 [Laughter]

20 So I'm praying for y'all as our leaders and as
21 our voices. The Bible tells us that we should pray
22 for our president and for our leaders that they
23 will make righteous decisions to help us. So when
24 you go and stand before Duke Power – we are also
25 praying for Duke Power, too, that they will

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1 consider the people and what they are able to do,
2 and think about their families if they was in that
3 position – their mothers, their sisters, their
4 brothers, their aunts, and their neighbors. If
5 they would sit down and think, and ask the Lord to
6 guide them, it would help us all. So I'm praying.
7 This is my prayer for you all, that you all make
8 righteous decisions for us. Thank you.

9 [Applause]

10 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you.

11 Questions from the parties?

12 **MR. MICHAEL FOWLER:** If I'm not out of order,
13 if I have some minutes left, I'd like to add to
14 hers. I'm Michael Fowler, her husband.

15 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Yes, sir.

16 **MR. MICHAEL FOWLER:** It's my prayer that the
17 committee people – that the Chronicles tonight be
18 written in favor of the people, whether it be
19 binding here or in heaven. It's a terrible thing
20 to fall in the hand of the living God, our great
21 spirit. So consciously or unconsciously, it's our
22 prayer that you hear the will of the people. Thank
23 you.

24 [Applause]

25 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you.

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1 **MR. NELSON:** I'm sorry. Mr. and Ms. Fowler,
2 if you could talk to – just step back here
3 [indicating]. Your bill seems like there might be
4 something seriously wrong with it, and we'd really
5 like to take the opportunity to come talk to you
6 about it.

7 **WITNESS:** Thank you.

8 [Witness excused]

9 **MR. DONG:** Is Mr. McGuffee or Mr. Johnson
10 here?

11 [No response]

12 Okay. What about Ms. Vanderford?

13 **MS. VANDERFORD:** Here.

14 **MR. DONG:** And after Ms. Vanderford, we've got
15 Clarke Phillips, Robert Mayer, and E.J. Irick.

16 [Witness affirmed]

17 THEREUPON came,

18 **K A T H R Y N V A N D E R F O R D ,**
19 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

20 **WITNESS:** my name is Kathryn Vanderford. I
21 live at 128 Belgian Blue Way, in Fountain Inn,
22 South Carolina.

23 And I didn't prepare a lot of stuff when I
24 came to this. I've never been to one of these
25 hearings. So what I have is my reaction to what

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1 I've heard so far, and just some gut feel from
2 before when I got here.

3 Number one, asking for a \$20 base increase,
4 which is a 250 percent increase, is criminal. The
5 question is, did they do that so they'd get 10.
6 And if y'all give them more than a buck on that
7 basic rate, y'all ought to just be taken to the
8 woodshed.

9 [Applause]

10 Number two, what they said this is for is to
11 clean up after storms and do all this other stuff.
12 I'm here to tell you that mother nature kicks us in
13 the butt every year.

14 **VOICE:** That's right.

15 **WITNESS:** And if this is not part of their
16 normal budget, their normal strategy, then these
17 people are incompetent, which makes the 21.4 –

18 [Applause]

19 **WITNESS:** Stop. I'm talking. – the \$21.4
20 million even a greater egregious act upon us as
21 ratepayers.

22 Now here's some quick math. I'm a nerd. Her
23 change in salary, from what I could calculate with
24 a 55 percent increase, was \$7.6 million. At 20
25 bucks a month, that means that, for the first

1 month, half of the ratepayers are paying for her
2 increase in bonus, because it takes 380,000 people
3 one month to pay for that. That's not going for
4 all this other crap they talked about, going to pay
5 that increase. It's criminal.

6 The other one is, what is their bonus
7 structure? Because if they've got a bonus
8 structure, that ought to go for this stuff that
9 they didn't figure out because they're incompetent.
10 There should be no bonuses.

11 The other one is, somebody up here was saying
12 North Carolina pays .08 cents, or whatever it was,
13 per kilowatt-hour; we're paying .1. So he said
14 what's the difference? Nobody had an answer? The
15 difference is North Carolina, just a few miles from
16 here, is paying 20 percent less for their energy
17 than we're paying, and it's a fricking state line,
18 people; it is not rocket science.

19 I agree with the lady from Ford. If they
20 can't internally figure out where to come up with
21 this money when they make errors in their strategy,
22 then they are not worth the money we're paying
23 them.

24 Your answer to the questions about solar all
25 the time, asking people solar, solar, solar –

1 here's my answer about solar. I would not put a
2 solar anything on my house if I had to interact
3 with Duke. The only way I will put solar on my
4 house is when I go completely off the grid and say,
5 "Screw y'all,"

6 [Applause]

7 I'm done. Questions, gentlemen.

8 [Laughter]

9 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you.

10 Any questions for Ms. Vanderford?

11 **VICE CHAIRMAN WILLIAMS:** Mr. Chairman, I do
12 have one comment. And I mean this with all due
13 respect. I see there on the dais there are several
14 men, but we do have a fine young lady that's with
15 us, Ms. Florence Belser, who works with Girls
16 State. I know, I guess I'm right here on the end,
17 so folks look at me, but Ms. Belser is here, as
18 well.

19 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you.

20 **WITNESS:** I didn't say anything about y'all
21 being men. I said you were the one asking about
22 solar.

23 **COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS:** Thank you.

24 [Witness excused]

25 [Witness affirmed]

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1 THEREUPON came,

2 C L A R K E P H I L L I P S ,

3 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

4 WITNESS: Clarke Phillips, 108 Wolf Creek
5 Court, Greenville, South Carolina.

6 Just want to make a few other points,
7 electricity being the basic utility that everyone
8 needs. I serve a lot of people who are on oxygen
9 in their homes, and those compressors consume a lot
10 of electricity and they have to run 24 hours a day.
11 They're already getting kicked financially, just to
12 stay alive, and so we need to be very sensitive to
13 this utility that people don't have a choice of who
14 they're going to get it from.

15 I have been one of those solar investors, to
16 decrease the impact on the environment. This
17 proposal – I don't know where people are getting
18 their percentage from, but going from \$8.29 to
19 \$28-something, that's a 337 percent increase by my
20 math. That's a lot of difference. This – it's
21 just incredibly greedy.

22 Duke reimburses me if I overgenerate. They
23 reimburse me 4 cents per kilowatt-hour for every
24 excess bit of energy that I generate, but then they
25 charge me 11 or 10-point-something cents if I

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1 consume. So they're making some profit off of me,
2 some additional profit.

3 Duke made it – their profit went up 13 percent
4 in the last quarter of 2018. In just one quarter,
5 they made \$1 billion. So I'm really wondering why
6 they need a rate increase. I noticed that there's
7 a hundred-and-something million dollars to take
8 care of that failed nuclear project. They could
9 just write a check, and they wouldn't notice the
10 difference. So that's what they need to do. They
11 need to stop coming to us.

12 My proposal is, due to this corporate greed,
13 is that you respond by refusing every penny of
14 their additional greed –

15 [Applause]

16 – and maybe hand them a decrease –

17 [Applause]

18 – because they're making way more money than
19 they need to and what is reasonable. That's my
20 proposal. I'm done.

21 [Applause]

22 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you, Mr. Phillips.
23 Any questions of Mr. Phillips?

24 [No response]

25 Thank you, very much.

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1 [Witness excused]

2 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Mr. Mayer? Robert Mayer?
3 E.J. Irick?

4 VOICE: Not here.

5 MR. DONG: Okay. Norm Whaley, Alan Mitchell,
6 Deborah Yeargin, Pamela Robson.

7 MR. WHALEY: Whaley, that would be me.

8 MR. DONG: Hello, Mr. Whaley.

9 MR. WHALEY: Hello, Mr. Dong.

10 [Witness affirmed]

11 THEREUPON came,

12 N O R M A N J . W H A L E Y ,

13 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

14 WITNESS: Norman Josh Whaley, 25 Brookside
15 Circle, Apartment 103, Greenville, South Carolina
16 29609.

17 When I came here, I saw Mr. Randall Dong. I
18 had no faith in coming here. Let me tell you, this
19 one gentleman, if you've been around him enough,
20 he'll rub off on you. So I have faith in you
21 gentlemen. I start with that.

22 I just want to know why, before I pull my
23 switch, you increase my rate fee. Before I do
24 anything, I'm getting charged. I have a small
25 amount of money. I live in an apartment building

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1 where everybody has a small amount of money. We
2 have – our hallways are heated and cooled. These
3 people are living with their doors open, going
4 against their safety so they can not have to pay
5 these high bills. \$20 for each one of those people
6 is gonna be devastating.

7 I just want to know why. Why you charge me
8 for something I don't use? User fee? Come on. I
9 run a small business. When I make a mistake, I
10 suck it up. I pay my people and I suck up the end.
11 I don't go charging you [indicating] or you
12 [indicating] or you [indicating] for my mistakes.
13 That's awful.

14 Just give me a good reason why you're doing
15 this. That's all I ask. If you give me a good
16 enough reason, I'll understand. That's all I got
17 to say.

18 [Applause]

19 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you, Mr. Whaley. Any
20 questions for Mr. Whaley?

21 [No response]

22 Thank you, very much.

23 **WITNESS:** All right.

24 [Witness excused]

25 [Witness affirmed]

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1 THEREUPON came,

2 A L A N M I T C H E L L ,

3 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

4 **WITNESS:** Alan Mitchell, 212 Rebecca Street,
5 Greenville, South Carolina 29607.

6 I'm here tonight because I've heard all the
7 advertising about Duke wanting to increase our
8 rates. First, I'd like to say I agree with what
9 Mr. Gore said in the first hour and I also agree
10 with what Mr. Phillips said just a few minutes ago,
11 because he stole part of what I was gonna say. But
12 that's fine. I'll keep it short.

13 Duke Energy is a very large company. They
14 need to come before the Commission before they can
15 do a rate increase. That's the way it works. But
16 what I don't – I think Duke Energy has a lot of
17 good employees, because I've interacted with some
18 of them. What I don't understand is, like others,
19 why can't they better manage their own company.
20 The inner workings of the company, any company, you
21 have a fixed piece of pie. If you do better
22 service, then you can grow the pie. Duke Energy
23 seems to have their fixed piece of pie, but they
24 don't understand that people here are on fixed
25 incomes. So when Duke Energy wants more, they

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1 simply ask for it. And there's a strategy to it,
2 because if I go into negotiations and I ask for a
3 large amount, then I can settle for a smaller
4 amount. And if you check the public utility
5 records, that's what they've been doing over the
6 past years. The Commission has granted them a
7 small amount.

8 I would propose that you not only not grant
9 this increase but you also give them a decrease.

10 **VOICE:** Amen.

11 [Applause]

12 **WITNESS:** Let them see what it feels like to
13 not have enough money to do what they have to do.
14 Let them be able to rearrange their structure and
15 better manage their company. With us, when we have
16 a fixed income, that means we also have a fixed
17 outgo. Okay? And when we have that piece of pie
18 that we can cut up, I don't care how many ways,
19 that border is going to remain the same,
20 regardless. That's all I have to say. Thank you.

21 [Applause]

22 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you, Mr. Mitchell.

23 Any questions of the parties?

24 [No response]

25 Commissioners? Commissioner Ervin.

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EXAMINATION**BY COMMISSIONER ERVIN:**

Q Mr. Mitchell, just to follow up on your recommendation, if, hypothetically, the Public Service Commission did grant a decrease in rates – order a decrease in rates and deny the increase – do you think that might force Duke Energy to use the monies that they have more wisely?

VOICES: Yes. Yeah.

WITNESS: I don't think you can actually force anybody to do anything, but I think it would give them pause to at least do some investigations on how they're doing business.

VOICE: Right.

WITNESS: If you get everything you want – even as a child, if you get everything you want, you have no reins. So if they can work to restructure within their limits, then you have an opportunity to get something real.

BY COMMISSIONER ERVIN:

Q So your idea is physical discipline.

A Physical discipline, and financial discipline.

Q Financial discipline.

A Yes.

Q And using the resources you're given wisely.

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1 **A** Absolutely. I've done this – I've worked for a utility
2 company, and I know what it takes. I've done power
3 management, I've done weatherization programs, all kinds
4 of things, so I know what can be done. And I don't see
5 it happening within the Duke Energy structure.

6 **Q** Do you mind my asking which one you worked for?

7 **A** I worked for Seattle City Light, in Seattle, Washington.
8 It's a public utility company. My power bill for an
9 all-electric apartment in the '80s was \$4 a month. The
10 opposite public – I mean, private utility was \$20 a
11 month at the same time. That's just an example.

12 **Q** We appreciate you coming tonight. Thank you.

13 **A** Thank you.

14 [Applause]

15 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you, Mr. Mitchell.

16 [Witness excused]

17 **MR. DONG:** I'm going to go ahead and call the
18 next group, as well. So, Joe Carlson, Stacey Hunt,
19 Arlis Hopson, Inez Morris, Debra Dover.

20 [Witness affirmed]

21 THEREUPON came,

22 **P A M E L A R O B S O N ,**

23 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

24 **WITNESS:** Good evening. My name is Pam

25 Robson, R-o-b-s-o-n. I live at 315 Kings Mountain

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1 Drive, in Greer.

2 I find – this is very unusual for me, because
3 I'm not typically a public speaker, but I do find
4 that this is a very important topic that I think I
5 need to address.

6 My daughter and my grandchildren live with me.
7 My husband passed away 16 years ago. When he was
8 alive, it took both of our salaries to keep our
9 home. After he passed away, to keep my home, I had
10 to get a second job. I actually didn't go to work
11 tonight, so I could be here, so I am losing money.

12 When I first moved into Greer – I live, like I
13 said, on Kings Mountain Drive, in the Canebrake
14 subdivision – when you walked down onto my back
15 porch, all you could see was treetops. Now all I
16 see is rooftops. And that's why I'm here tonight,
17 because I know Duke Power is not hurting for money.
18 They're building in Greer just as fast as they can
19 slap them together.

20 I also work in the medical industry, as well
21 as work – my second job is for one of the largest
22 stores here in Greenville that supply alcohol to
23 the area. And it gives me a unique perspective on
24 both, because I do work collections for the medical
25 field and have for the last 20 years, and I have

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1 seen the change in the neighborhood and the
2 economy, the way people have to fight to pay their
3 medical bills, how they have to not do this to do
4 that. And also working in the alcohol industry, it
5 gives me a unique perspective in that I see how
6 people are moving into the area. We are a booming
7 town. The whole area near Hendersonville, North
8 Carolina, Asheville, Greenville, the whole upstate.
9 People are moving here because it's a nice place to
10 live. I see – I see, because we do card for
11 alcohol – I see license from all over the United
12 States come into the store. So I know Duke is not
13 hurting for money.

14 The fact that that lady got a 55 percent
15 increase over the last year proves it. They're not
16 hurting for money. And when I heard that – because
17 my daughter found online from the *Charlotte*
18 *Observer* the article about her getting her raise –
19 I got the question, and I started thinking out loud
20 to myself that, compared to her how do other
21 people's salaries run? So I went online and I
22 looked to see what the President of the United
23 States makes – and you gentlemen probably already
24 know this, but I suspect probably most of the
25 people here don't. The president –

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[3-minute alarm]

— makes four hundred fifty — or, \$400,000 a year annual salary. She makes 3½ times what that man makes. And I know her job is a big one, because she covers a large area, but this country is a whole lot bigger than what Duke Power covers. And I can't imagine how she could really expect to earn more than the President of the United States does.

So I am totally against this increase, and I hope you gentlemen will take this to heart.

One other statistic I need you to know about, and that is about the children of this County, which no one has brought up yet. One in every four children in Greenville County go to bed hungry every night. And if you let this increase go through, in two years that'll be two children. And in four years, that'll be all four of them going to bed hungry at night, because their parents can't afford to feed them. They either pay the power or they pay to feed them.

[Applause]

CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Ms. Robson.

Any questions?

MR. NELSON: I have one question.

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CROSS EXAMINATION**BY MR. NELSON:**

Q I'm a lawyer and I'm not real good at math, but what you said was that the President earns \$400,000 and the CEO of Duke earns – what times?

A Three point seven five [3.75] times the number. I worked it out.

Q Because my math worked out to about 30 times.

VOICE: It's fifty-three point five [53.5] times.

WITNESS: Fifty-three? Okay. I was working in percentages, but – that's right, I mean, she makes so much more than he does, and he has a lot bigger, you know, country to cover than she does.

MR. NELSON: Thank you.

WITNESS: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you. Commissioner Ervin.

COMMISSIONER WHITFIELD: Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Oh, Commissioner Whitfield.

EXAMINATION**BY COMMISSIONER WHITFIELD:**

Q Ms. Robson.

A Yes, sir.

Q I've got a question for you.

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1 **A** Yes, sir.

2 **Q** I want to turn back to you just a minute. We've heard a
3 lot of others say they work multiple jobs to pay their
4 bills and to make ends meet, and you mentioned both your
5 jobs. If you don't mind me asking, counting your second
6 job, how many hours a week do you work?

7 **A** I work 40 hours at my full-time job; I work 30 to 35
8 hours at my second job.

9 **Q** So you're doing almost 80 hours a week.

10 **A** Yes, sir. And if this increase goes through, then my
11 power bill – you know, I work just to keep my home,
12 because that's where my grandchildren have always lived.
13 But this thing is gonna put me out of my house.

14 **Q** Thank you for sharing your testimony, Ms. Robson.

15 **A** Thank you.

16 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you, Ms. Robson.

17 [Applause]

18 [Witness excused]

19 [Witness affirmed]

20 THEREUPON came,

21 **S T A C E Y H U N T ,**

22 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

23 **WITNESS:** My name is Stacy Hunt. I live in
24 District 7 of Taylors, South Carolina. I don't
25 feel comfortable giving my address out to strangers

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1 and live feeds, but it is on the sign-in sheet and
2 I be more than happy to give it privately.

3 I'm a Yankee myself. I moved to South
4 Carolina five and a half years ago to get away from
5 this particular thing, because I thought South
6 Carolina cared about their residents and their cost
7 of living and robbing their taxpayers blind. It
8 doesn't seem to be the case.

9 South Carolina has about half the cost of
10 living and income versus Connecticut, where I'm
11 from. Yet for some reason Duke Energy is charging
12 way more than the utilities in Connecticut. And I
13 can't quite fathom that.

14 United Illuminating is the Duke Energy of
15 Connecticut, and their base rate right now is
16 \$12.84. And they make more than double the income
17 there in Connecticut. So I'd like somebody to
18 explain to me how this can even be justified to
19 charge more than double what an extremely higher-
20 cost-of-living state is paying.

21 I'd also like to state on the record that it
22 seems to me like Duke Energy has been allowed to
23 get away with criminal activity time and time
24 again.

25 **VOICE:** Amen.

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1 **WITNESS:** You heard from repeated people about
2 these bills – \$700 a month bills. It seems to me
3 that they're being allowed to pick on the small
4 person who doesn't have the means for an attorney
5 or to stand up for themselves. And I happen to be
6 one of them, because when I moved here five and a
7 half years ago and set my account up with Duke
8 Energy, I was required to put up a \$200 deposit.
9 No problem. I was told that I would receive that
10 deposit back in a year if I remained a customer.
11 Well, I did. Obviously, I'm still a customer,
12 because there's no other options for us. For four
13 and a half years, I have been denied my refund for
14 every excuse in the book, and most recent I'm told
15 I won't get my refund back as long as I'm a
16 customer. And someone here tonight said, "Oh,
17 they'll get away with it. You'll never get it
18 back." Bet me I won't. Okay? Because I've had
19 enough.

20 But the fact is, I am a single mother. I've
21 worked two jobs. I've paid into the system for
22 over 32 years and working 70 hours a week, as well.
23 I'm 48 years old and facing temporary disability,
24 so I can fix a shoulder, so that I can work for 20
25 more years and have no retirement but that Social

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1 Security.

2 Let me inform you, if you're not aware,
3 disability pays \$900 a month, which is less than
4 half of what I make right now, okay? And that's
5 not a lot. To most of us in this room, that's not
6 a lot. But it also takes five months to get that
7 disability. Okay? I have a tear in my shoulder.
8 I can't work; I can barely use my arm. So what am
9 I supposed to do for five months while Duke Energy
10 insists that you don't have time to pay your bill.
11 They don't work with you. They also are allowed to
12 charge whatever they want on a late fee.

13 [3-minute alarm]

14 Obviously, my time is up. Most companies
15 charge a \$5 a month late fee or a set amount in
16 your car payment or mortgage. Duke Energy is
17 fluctuating that payment from \$1 to \$10 or \$15
18 dollars a month, and that's disgusting.

19 **VOICE:** It's a rip-off.

20 [Applause]

21 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you, Ms. Hunt.

22 Any questions for Ms. Hunt?

23 **MR. NELSON:** Ms. Hunt, I can't help with a lot
24 of these issues, but I think that deposit thing is
25 something that maybe we can help you with. If

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1 you'll look right back here [indicating]. There's
2 Ms. Hipp, is standing up right now? If you'll go
3 talk with her when you get done here, I'd
4 appreciate it. I think maybe we can help.

5 **WITNESS:** I will. Thank you.

6 **EXAMINATION**

7 **BY COMMISSIONER BELSER:**

8 **Q** Ms. Hunt?

9 **A** Yes, ma'am.

10 **Q** Tell me about your late fee. Over here.

11 **A** Oh. I have my bills with me. I came prepared. And I'd
12 also be glad to – here are some of the Connecticut
13 rates, at 9 cents and whatnot, if you'd like me to
14 submit it for your review.

15 **Q** There's a regulation that states that the late fee
16 cannot exceed 1½ percent of the balance brought forward,
17 so you might want to talk to Ms. Hipp about that, as
18 well. Let her see the bill.

19 **A** You know – yeah.

20 **COMMISSIONER BELSER:** Thank you.

21 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you.

22 [Witness excused]

23 [Witness affirmed]

24 <

25 <

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1 THEREUPON came,

2 I N E Z M O R R I S ,

3 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

4 WITNESS: Good evening. My name is Inez
5 Morris, and I live at 4 Queen Alley, Greenville,
6 South Carolina 29611.

7 And I, too – as someone stated, I live in one
8 of the what is called special emphasis neighborhood
9 in Greenville, and I live in a neighborhood where
10 we have a lot of senior citizens. We also have
11 people who are single parents, who are struggling
12 to pay their bills each month. And with the rate
13 increase, it will just make things more difficult.

14 I was a single parent raising two children,
15 and I know what it's like. Today I stand here as a
16 senior citizen who still knows what it's like to
17 have to pay your bills and have to struggle to make
18 ends meet, to decide whether you pay your bill,
19 whether you eat, or whether you pay for your
20 medication.

21 So what I'm here tonight to say to do – or, to
22 say is that Duke Energy needs to think about all
23 the people, not just some people but all the
24 people, because all the people are important and
25 all the people need to be able to live, to pay

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1 their bills from month-to-month.

2 I calculated it out. The lady talked about
3 \$800 a month Social Security. That comes out to
4 \$9600 a year. If she's paying rent at \$400-\$500 a
5 month, that's \$6000 right there. Then she has
6 medication, she has food. We have grandparents
7 raising grandchildren. We have great-grandparents
8 raising great-grandchildren. Life is not easy, and
9 these people, we struggle. We don't make \$21
10 million. We don't make that kind of money.

11 And my thing is, as seniors, Duke Energy ought
12 to be thinking about us and maybe have a senior
13 rate, where we have an adjustment in our bill each
14 month based on our age, just like they do with
15 property taxes.

16 So I'm asking the Public Service Commission to
17 vote no to Duke Energy rate increase. Thank you.

18 [Applause]

19 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you, Ms. Morris.

20 Any questions from the parties?

21 [No response]

22 Commissioners?

23 **EXAMINATION**

24 **BY COMMISSIONER ERVIN:**

25 **Q** I want to thank you for coming tonight and making your

1 points. I'd like for ORS to check and see if there are
2 other states that have a rate for senior citizens. I
3 know we have one for the property taxes –

4 **A** Right.

5 **Q** – or the homestead exemption.

6 **A** Right.

7 **Q** And, you know, that's a great idea. I never thought
8 about it. But once somebody reaches retirement age, you
9 could have a phased-in reduction, and you could even –

10 **A** That's a good idea.

11 **Q** – you could base it on income. It wouldn't have to be
12 for everybody.

13 **A** Right.

14 **Q** The millionaires don't need it.

15 **A** Uh-huh, and I think it –

16 **Q** And –

17 **A** – should be a percentage of –

18 **Q** Yeah, somebody that's living at or below property level
19 could benefit from it.

20 **VOICE:** Yes.

21 **WITNESS:** That's correct.

22 **VOICE:** Certainly.

23 **COMMISSIONER ERVIN:** I'd like to know if
24 that's ever been tried before.

25 **WITNESS:** Yes, that is correct.

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1 **COMMISSIONER ERVIN:** Great idea. Thank you.

2 **WITNESS:** Thank you.

3 [Applause]

4 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you, Ms. Morris.

5 [Witness excused]

6 [Witness affirmed]

7 THEREUPON came,

8 **J O E C A R L S O N ,**

9 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

10 **WITNESS:** My name is Joe Carlson. I live at
11 109 Cedar Ridge Lane, Simpsonville, South Carolina
12 29681.

13 When I first got here, I had a specific
14 message that I wanted to relay, specifically, to
15 the facilities charge. My concern was actually
16 things that were not justified, and what it was
17 actually covering, and why were they increasing a
18 fee? Something that was not explained to begin
19 with.

20 I had some understandings from conversations
21 with Duke Power as to what those coverages were,
22 but nothing was clear, and nothing's been
23 documented on the site. Matter of fact, I talked
24 to three different entities in Duke Power, and they
25 did not provide me with any of the information

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1 documented.

2 Standing around here listening for the number
3 of hours that I've been here, I gotta say, wow. I
4 mean, I thought it was bad. This is really bad. I
5 listen to people with \$800 electric bills. I mean,
6 you got to be kidding me. I'm from New York, and I
7 tell you something: That would never stand.
8 Somebody would be unbelievably – there'd be riots
9 in the street.

10 If you up there before us, you know, if you
11 issue a discount or a decrease to Duke Power, and
12 they said, "Well, what about our increase?" you
13 say, "You know what, you don't get your increase.
14 Instead, we're going to give you a decrease."

15 **VOICE:** Sell their stock.

16 **WITNESS:** What are they gonna do? Are they
17 going to pack up their electricity and leave? I
18 don't think that's the case. Do you think if you
19 trade them out and said, "Okay, you're going to get
20 a decrease of 10 percent," or 20 percent, or hit
21 them between the eyes and give them 25 percent
22 decrease, do you think that \$21 million CEO is
23 going to turn and say, "I don't want to play
24 anymore"? You think if you even said to her, "I'm
25 gonna give you \$15 million instead of \$21 million,"

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1 do you think she's going to say no? She's not
2 going anywhere. None of them are going anywhere.

3 I mean, a while back, a long time – a number
4 of years ago, we heard somebody up on a podium turn
5 around and say, "You let me get away with it."
6 They said, "I hedged on my taxes and you let me get
7 away with it." And nobody really picked up on it.
8 Don't let them get away with this. They're not too
9 big to fail. They're responsible to us.

10 And I tell you, I'm sitting here and I
11 listened – I listened to the gentleman talk about
12 how he's got an education for the past couple of
13 nights or so. I tell you something; I sat here and
14 within the first hour, I had an education. And I'm
15 convinced that, if I sat where you're sitting right
16 now, I'd be giving the decrease – if I didn't kick
17 them in the ass before they even got in the door.

18 [Applause]

19 I think that if you just really step back –
20 and I really can't ask you guys – I don't know your
21 mindsets. I'm looking at the expressions on your
22 faces and so forth, and I'm hoping that you're
23 going to walk out of here tonight and just realize
24 that you don't do this, you can't give them any
25 kind of increase. That's the bottom line. You

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1 just walk out of here tonight after hearing what
2 you've heard over the past couple of days, and
3 tonight's situation, and say, "You just can't – you
4 can't have an increase," end of story. That should
5 be a definite, walking out of here.

6 **VOICE:** Grow a pair.

7 **WITNESS:** Give them a decrease, and –

8 **VOICE:** Grow a –

9 **WITNESS:** – I think it'll straighten –

10 **VOICE:** – pair.

11 **WITNESS:** – them out a little bit.

12 [3-minute alarm]

13 Go ahead and give the decrease, without a
14 doubt.

15 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you, Mr. Carlson.

16 Any questions for Mr. Carlson from the
17 parties?

18 [No response]

19 Commissioners?

20 [No response]

21 Thank you.

22 [Witness excused]

23 **MR. DONG:** Larry Moore, Jatavia Rhodes, Kaye
24 Young, Maureen Nutting, Kenny Johnson.

25 [Witness affirmed]

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1 THEREUPON came,

2 L A R R Y M O O R E ,

3 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

4 WITNESS: My name is Larry Moore, 505 Summit
5 Bluff Drive, Greenville, South Carolina.

6 Ladies and gentlemen, thank you. I've been
7 very fortunate in life to have a between 45- and
8 50-year business career. During that time, I've
9 worked for two different electrical utilities,
10 neither of which was Duke. In the last 15 years of
11 my working career, I was project manager for a
12 large electrical contractor that worked all over
13 the Southeast.

14 I'm gonna take a little different cut at it.
15 The gentleman who was the economist earlier kind of
16 touched on the topic, and a couple of other people
17 have. I'm going to look at it from an operational
18 standpoint and a profit-and-loss standpoint for the
19 utility.

20 When I retired, the homeowners' association –
21 I live in a subdivision of slightly less than 300
22 homes. Duke provides the lighting for the streets
23 and the common areas, which includes the pool. The
24 lights have not burned in that pool for two years.
25 They have collected a fee once a month.

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1 The homeowners' association came to me and
2 said, "Would you get involved?" I speak the
3 language, so I began. I called customer service,
4 told them the situation. They couldn't locate the
5 pool, so I gave them my home address and said,
6 "Let's start there." The response a few days later
7 was two line trucks and two first-class linemen.
8 Ladies and gentlemen, that's \$300,000 worth of
9 rolling stock and two first-class lineman rang my
10 doorbell, said, "We understand you've got a power
11 outage." I says, "No. It's down at the pool, but
12 I'll take you down there." "We don't work on that.
13 We contract that out to a secondary contractor."
14 They left.

15 Long story short, this began in April. For
16 the next five months, Duke or two other of their
17 contractors – which is normal policy for them –
18 made nine different trips out to get six lights to
19 work. Three of those nine trips, no work was done
20 because they said, "Why are we even here? We don't
21 have materials. The work order is wrong, and
22 everything else." Customer service at Duke is a
23 circus.

24 **VOICES:** Amen.

25 **WITNESS:** It got to the point I felt bad about

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1 calling back because it got to the point I felt
2 like I was badgering somebody, except every time I
3 called, I talk to a different person. Giving them
4 even their internal work order number as a
5 reference, it all began as the initial call. I had
6 to get them up-to-date where we were. And I said,
7 “You know, this is real simple. We just want the
8 lights to burn. It’s a safety hazard for the kids
9 in the neighborhood and it’s a security hazard for
10 the entire subdivision.”

11 Fortunately, I was finally able to talk to
12 someone on the crew, who is an operations guy – and
13 I’m not going to use any names, but they said,
14 “Larry, we do it all the time. They run us around
15 in circles. We don’t have the material. And the
16 people in the call center –

17 [3-minute alarm]

18 – are on a time clock, and their goal is, when
19 they take a call, the quicker they can get off of
20 it and move to the next one – whether they made a
21 resolution to the problem or not – is their primary
22 driver.

23 I’m here to tell you, when I was working as a
24 project manager, I worked crews anywhere from 10 to
25 200 people. If that was the way that I ran the

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1 business when I was a project manager for that
2 contractor, gentlemen, I would have not been able
3 to continue working there.

4 I submit to you there is an internal
5 disconnect between customer service, operations,
6 and the personnel to do the work in the field. I
7 will also say this, and then I'll wrap up. To a
8 person, the field personnel and the two additional
9 contractors that all came out were almost as
10 frustrated as I was, because their time was being
11 wasted. The largest crew that ever showed up – and
12 this is for six lights around a pool – eight men,
13 three bucket trucks, a line truck, and two pickups.
14 That's probably \$½ million of rolling stock and the
15 number of personnel making their first-class
16 lineman hourly rate. Inefficiency doesn't even
17 come – that's not even a good adjective.

18 But I thank you for your time.

19 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you, Mr. Moore.

20 **EXAMINATION**

21 **BY COMMISSIONER ERVIN:**

22 **Q** I'd like to ask you a question, if you don't mind.

23 **A** Yes, sir, absolutely.

24 **Q** How do you fix that problem internally? How would you
25 begin to fix it?

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1 **A** You have to have people that are processing the call
2 center – and I’m speaking from previous experience here
3 – number one, who will listen to the customers when they
4 call. And, again, I’m working from an operational and
5 engineering side. But then also know there has to be a
6 system to convey from that call to the next level, to
7 the operational people who are going to dispatch the
8 crews. They’re going to have to know what in the heck
9 they’re going out to fix in the first place.

10 **Q** So there’s a tremendous disconnect there, obviously?

11 **A** A huge disconnect.

12 **Q** And so, if we wanted to have input on that – because
13 you’re right, that is a total waste of time, money, and
14 resources. And so, how do we fix that from a governance
15 standpoint? What kind of guidance do we impose on them?
16 Are there metrics available? Training manuals? Tell us
17 how to –

18 **A** Well, my question to you ladies and gentlemen is, when
19 they come before you, before you even talk money, talk
20 operations.

21 **Q** Right.

22 **A** And say, “This is what we’re hearing.” And by the way,
23 Commissioner Ervin, and the gentleman here for the
24 Regulatory Commission, you have my five-page letter. It
25 should be on file that I submitted.

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1 **Q** All right, sir.

2 **A** And it gives you chapter and verse of the dates, phone
3 calls, the number of people I've talked to, and whether
4 it was –

5 **Q** Well, you're very informative in this topic, and your
6 practical expense would be invaluable. I would suggest
7 ORS consider using you as a lay witness at the hearing,
8 because –

9 **A** I'd be most happy.

10 **Q** – we need to fix –

11 [Applause]

12 – that problem, because it's costing us all money.

13 **VOICE:** Yes.

14 **WITNESS:** Well, it absolutely is. And the
15 bigger issue, it's a complete waste, and – but
16 trust me, when that bucket truck that runs anywhere
17 from a hundred and fifty [\$150,000] to \$200,000 a
18 copy rolls out of the work center, somebody is
19 paying for that. And that first-class lineman
20 doesn't work for free, either. But when they tell
21 me on more than one occasion, "It happens all the
22 time" –

23 **COMMISSIONER ERVIN:** Would you give him your
24 contact information, and would you be available to
25 come to Columbia and testify, if asked to?

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1 **WITNESS:** I would, sir.

2 **COMMISSIONER ERVIN:** All right. Thank you.

3 [Applause]

4 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you, Mr. Moore.

5 [Witness excused]

6 [Witness affirmed]

7 **MR. DONG:** It looks like – June Baswell, Betsy
8 George, Ross Buchanan, Laura Riddick, Arita Owens,
9 Paul Gimble, Rev. Flemming, Trudy Horton, Gerald
10 Horton.

11 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Come forward, sir.

12 [Witness affirmed]

13 THEREUPON came,

14 **R O S S B U C H A N A N ,**

15 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

16 **WITNESS:** Ross Buchanan, 73 Doris Lisa View
17 Drive, Hendersonville, North Carolina.

18 Yeah, I drove about 70 miles or so to get
19 here, because I spent last week trying to get
20 through to the CEO, Lynn Good.

21 I think it's ridiculous – I don't have to
22 repeat what everybody else has said. This kind of
23 an increase for not using one drop of power? I
24 don't even know why you're even considering it,
25 much less even talking about it. It's a complete

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1 absurdity.

2 I spoke with Lynn Good's executive secretary –
3 I won't mention her name, but she was very helpful,
4 a very nice woman. And I told her she could
5 probably teach Lynn Good a lot about customer
6 service, because apparently they don't have much
7 there.

8 **VOICE:** Amen.

9 **WITNESS:** I also don't quite – I'm not here to
10 beg. I'm not here to ask anything. That's not how
11 I operate. That's just not my style. I understand
12 the public employee and public commission
13 relationship to the public, and I know who the boss
14 is, so I'm not here to ask anything. I'm not here
15 to beg. And it's a shame that some people come up
16 here and just beg. And I understand why. I
17 understand when they get in that kind of position –
18 I was in that position 10 years ago. My wife was
19 on oxygen. She was on a nebulizer. And it was
20 August of 2009, and I remember that time well. We
21 were all going through a bad recession. I was
22 unemployed. I needed two more days to get my power
23 bill paid. Duke Power didn't want to hear it; they
24 just wanted their \$100. I said, "You realize, my
25 wife might quit breathing." They didn't care. And

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1 so, basically, they put my wife's life and health
2 at risk for their money. And I haven't forgotten
3 it. It's been 10 years I've been waiting.

4 They want to put a smart meter on my property?
5 It ain't happening. They tried. They got
6 everybody in my neighborhood, but they didn't get
7 mine. And you want – well, I could tell you what I
8 was going to. I'm an electrician myself, and I
9 think they looked at that box and they figured they
10 might not want to be touching them wires.

11 [Laughter]

12 And everybody who's come in here telling you
13 about what's going on with these smart meters – I
14 made Lynn Good an offer last week, and she rejected
15 me cold. I said, "I want to keep my analog meter
16 and I want to keep – you can put the smart meter
17 in, but I'm gonna have a double check, because I
18 don't trust them." And you can tell why I don't
19 trust them, because everybody's bill's gone up when
20 they put them smart meters in.

21 And I see the clock ticking. I really don't
22 care.

23 They're criminal. And I'm going to tell you
24 one last thing: When it comes down to this, I'm
25 David –

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1 [3-minute alarm]

2 – versus Goliath. And there's something that
3 y'all don't know, that most people don't know.
4 When David reached down and he picked up those five
5 stones out of the brook, there was a reason why he
6 picked up five. David was a man of courage, but he
7 was also pretty smart. Goliath had four ugly
8 brothers just like him. Little piece of biblical
9 history you might want to pay attention to. Thank
10 you.

11 [Applause]

12 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you, Mr. Buchanan.

13 Any questions?

14 [No response]

15 Thank you.

16 [Witness excused]

17 [Witness affirmed]

18 THEREUPON came,

19 **G E R A L D H O R T O N ,**

20 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

21 **WITNESS:** I work for the State. I'm a retired
22 sergeant, ex-law enforcement. Having said that, if
23 it was not for my State retirement, as well as my
24 Social Security, there's no way I could meet
25 everything. And my wife, behind me, she's been

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1 laid off. And unfortunately, when all this
2 happened with me and I become disabled, we had a
3 house down in Simpsonville – 116 Waterton Way – and
4 unfortunately we lost it, and only had about five
5 years left to pay on it. After I become disabled,
6 my wife got laid off for a year and a half. And my
7 mom died – that's where I live at now. If it
8 hadn't been for my mom, we'd've been homeless.

9 I live at 120 Welcome Avenue, Greenville,
10 South Carolina. It's not three miles from here.

11 Well, what I come to say is, I've done a
12 little bit of everything under the sun. I'm not a
13 certified electrician. I could probably go get my
14 journeyman's card tomorrow. I worked for Schmidt
15 Manufacturing for years out at the plant, managing,
16 and I run the maintenance department. And these
17 smart meters you're talking about, my bill, since
18 they put it in has gradually increased. It's about
19 double what it was two years ago to three years ago
20 now.

21 So, something's going on, because I ain't used
22 no more power. Matter of fact, I'm probably using
23 less power now because, unfortunately, since I'm
24 disabled, I can't get in the shower and take a good
25 shower like everybody else. I do a lot of wipes

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1 and, you know, bedside whenever.

2 But having said that, there's got to be –
3 there's got to be a limit. There's only so much –
4 there's only so much the public can endure. And,
5 you know, I'm on a fixed income, and, yeah, it's
6 funny, you always try to get or make as much money
7 as you can. In my situation, I make \$200 too much
8 to get any help. Two hundred dollars [\$200]. Have
9 you ever wished you couldn't make \$200? I make
10 \$200 too much: no Medicare.

11 I have had to either buy my medicine or pay my
12 bills. Same way with this Duke Power, man. I hate
13 to come down to either – I pay all my bills first;
14 it's what we've got left for food or whatever. You
15 know, or whether or not I get my medicine. Matter
16 of fact, I stopped driving for a while because I
17 crashed three of my cars because of my diabetes and
18 sleep apnea, and I couldn't afford to get my
19 insulin and stuff because it's high – that's
20 another story altogether with pharmaceutical
21 companies. So, you know, I crashed going down
22 Highway 20 here, run up underneath an 18-wheeler,
23 about killed myself. Thank God there wasn't nobody
24 in front of me. So, and then I was coming up
25 Highway 20 and there at Lakeside Park, blacked out,

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1 because I didn't have my medicine. I run off the
2 left side of the road and cut down about six or
3 eight mailboxes out there. Cut across in front of
4 a dump truck, you know, because I couldn't afford
5 to get my medicine, to have power.

6 [3-minute alarm]

7 I'll try to make this quick. But, you know,
8 what gets me is I'm in a little better situation
9 than a lot of these other people are, but if this
10 keeps going up, I mean, I don't know – like Lynn
11 Good, I'm sure she's a capable woman and I'm sure
12 she's well accomplished, but it's like this, there
13 ain't a soul on this earth – I don't care who it is
14 – deserves \$21.4 million a year.

15 [Applause]

16 The only person, if he was still here in a
17 human form, would've been Jesus Christ who deserves
18 that.

19 But it is – I mean, they have lost touch with
20 reality, man. I mean, they're – you know, there
21 ain't no way – you want your money? You want to
22 fix this Duke Power? Cut about four or five of
23 them jobs and see what happens. There's your
24 money. But, I mean, and it – that 21.4 last year,
25 that's 55 percent more than the year before.

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1 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you, sir.

2 **WITNESS:** And like this gentleman said here,
3 says he's gonna go down to Columbia, you say you
4 cut her pay down to \$8-\$10 million, you think she's
5 gonna leave? If she's does, she's lost her mind.
6 Where else is she gonna go to make that?

7 But as far as customer service goes, I agree
8 with these other people. As far as extra time on
9 the bill, I got a friend of mine sitting right
10 here. She's coming up shortly. I had to let her
11 borrow money – thank God – because they cut her
12 power off and wouldn't give her another day or two,
13 and the next – when they did cut it off and cut it
14 back on, same day or next day they charged her a
15 \$250 deposit. If you can't pay the \$200 bill you
16 got, how in the hell you gonna pay \$250 more to go
17 with it?

18 [Applause]

19 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you, sir.

20 **WITNESS:** I ain't – and on top of that –

21 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** I understand.

22 **WITNESS:** I mean, if y'all want to send these
23 guys a message, if the powers that be, if y'all
24 would do it: No. Hey, by God, they ain't got a
25 problem telling us no on the phone, "We can't help

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1 you.” I tell you that right now. Tell them no,
2 and if y’all could cut them, oh, my God, man, if
3 you could give them a decrease. You want to slap
4 some reality or you want to get some attention,
5 that’s how you do it.

6 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you.

7 **EXAMINATION**

8 **BY COMMISSIONER ERVIN:**

9 **Q** Appreciate you coming today. Do you go to the
10 Greenville Free Clinic for help?

11 **A** No, sir. I make too much – I got Humana. Thank God.
12 Love Humana.

13 **Q** Yeah.

14 **A** But, you know, if it wasn’t – if it wasn’t for my State
15 retirement from police officer service, I’d be screwed,
16 man.

17 **Q** We appreciate your service in the police department and
18 wish you all the best.

19 **A** Well, I may end up finally being a millionaire. It
20 might be in scrap, though, because the surgery on my
21 back was \$387,000, which I didn’t have no insurance
22 then. But --

23 **COMMISSIONER ERVIN:** Well, let’s let some of
24 these other people talk, because you’ve run out of
25 time. Thank you.

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1 **WITNESS:** But if I could render these, I might
2 have a million dollars.

3 **COMMISSIONER ERVIN:** All right. Thank you.

4 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you. Who's the next
5 witness?

6 **COMMISSIONER BELSER:** She needs a name.

7 **MR. DONG:** Sir?

8 **WITNESS:** Oh, I'm sorry. Gerald Horton.

9 [Witness excused]

10 [Witness affirmed]

11 THEREUPON came,

12 **A R I T A O W E N S ,**

13 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

14 **WITNESS:** My name is Arita Owens. I live at
15 14 Kimbell Avenue – I mean, Court. Kimbell Court.
16 ZIP Code 29617.

17 I just wanted to speak for everybody of the
18 poor and the middle class. They don't need no
19 increase.

20 And another thing, they sold my house on St.
21 Clair Street right before Thanksgiving. Me and the
22 baby back there [indicating] has been going through
23 a lots. We had – they sold our house, the landlord
24 did, and said that the man that bought it wouldn't
25 make us move, and it was right between Thanksgiving

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1 and Christmas. Well, after he got hold of the
2 land, he wanted us right out of there.

3 So I tried to get me and the baby a place in a
4 hurry to live, so I moved on this place – thank
5 God, I hope it burns down.

6 [Laughter]

7 – on Hagood Street. Right behind the
8 apartments was an old railroad track. Well,
9 anyway, the landlord said the apartment was in good
10 shape. Well, I paid my deposit and I paid my rent,
11 not knowing what that place was like. When I moved
12 in, two nights later, this – I thought it was rain
13 coming in on me, and it was sewerage out the
14 commode. I told the baby, I looked at her and I
15 said, “We’ve got to get out of here.” So we had to
16 make another move. We moved from St. Clair to
17 Hagood to 14 Kimbell Avenue – I mean, Street. I’m
18 getting all the streets and all mixed up. It’s 14
19 Kimball Court.

20 Anyway, it’s a nice place. But I had changed
21 so many times with Duke Energy that the account got
22 messed up, and some way they said somebody said I
23 wasn’t living at 14 Kimbell Court, that it was
24 somebody else. I told Duke Energy, “No, it’s me.”
25 I had to give them my mother’s maiden name, the

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1 year I was born, and all. They still ain't got it
2 straightened out. They say, right now – they said
3 from the time somebody else tried to get the
4 electricity changed over in their name, that I
5 wouldn't have to pay a bill from January to
6 February, a certain day – I got it wrote down in
7 the car. Well, right now, they changed another
8 story. They say right now –

9 [3-minute alarm]

10 They said I wouldn't have to pay a light bill
11 for 45 days. Right now, they say I owe \$500-and-
12 some. And I ain't even lived there that long.

13 **COMMISSIONER ERVIN:** I tell you what. In the
14 interest of time, these people in the back at that
15 table can help you.

16 **WITNESS:** Okay.

17 **COMMISSIONER ERVIN:** You go back and –

18 **WITNESS:** But I wanted to –

19 **COMMISSIONER ERVIN:** – they'll get your
20 information.

21 **VICE CHAIRMAN WILLIAMS:** I don't think they're
22 – they're not with ORS.

23 **COMMISSIONER ERVIN:** All right.

24 **WITNESS:** I wanted to say poor people and
25 middle class need help, not –

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1 **COMMISSIONER ERVIN:** Where did our ORS –

2 **WITNESS:** – an increase.

3 **COMMISSIONER ERVIN:** – people go? There she
4 is. She's holding up her hand. She can help you.

5 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you, ma'am.

6 [Witness excused]

7 Come forward please.

8 **MR. DONG:** Dora Evans, Donald Brown.

9 [Witness affirmed]

10 THEREUPON came,

11 **T R U D Y H O R T O N ,**

12 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

13 **WITNESS:** My name is Trudy Horton. I live at
14 120 Welcome Avenue, Greenville, South Carolina.

15 I wanted to tell you that if you give them
16 that increase, that it's going to hurt our finances
17 incredibly bad. We will not be able to afford
18 food. We will not be able to afford medicine, if
19 you give them that increase. And that's it for me.

20 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you, Ms. Horton.

21 [Witness excused]

22 Next.

23 [Witness affirmed]

24 <

25 <

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1 THEREUPON came,

2 T R A C E K E L L E T T ,

3 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

4 WITNESS: My name is Trace Kellett. I live at
5 1 Charing Cross Road, Taylors.

6 A lot of good-looking people in here tonight.
7 There's got to be, right?

8 [Laughter]

9 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, thank you.

10 WITNESS: Anyway, I concur with what all these
11 other people have been saying. What I want to do
12 is maybe change gears a little bit in proposing to
13 restructure their ideas on the rate increase.
14 Okay. If the rate increase – if they're trying to
15 improve on their income, what they should do is
16 think about the ones who are thriving and not the
17 ones who are just as surviving.

18 I think what's going on is people are getting
19 more surveillance in the business end of it, and
20 therefore when they get more surveillance they need
21 energy for that, and then when they have that
22 they've got to have more energy for lighting,
23 bigger storefronts, more neon lights, colors, so to
24 speak. And the people that are just existing
25 instead of living, and surviving instead of

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1 thriving, just leave the residents out of it
2 altogether. Instead of doing – what was it? – 9
3 percent on the business end? Just go ahead and
4 charge them 12 percent, and just leave the
5 residents out of it altogether, and I'm sure
6 basically if you're saying 12 percent on the
7 residents, basically 20 bucks for the lower-class,
8 or even up to 100 bucks, you charge that on the
9 business end and somebody with a \$5000 power bill
10 to run a business, and their rate goes up 20
11 percent – you can do the math – it will easily
12 cover hundreds of people in the residence sector.

13 Thank you for your time. You guys have been
14 great, and I hope you guys do the right thing.
15 Thank you so much, okay?

16 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you, Mr. Kellett.
17 Any questions?

18 [No response]

19 Thank you. very much.

20 **WITNESS:** Appreciate it, guys.

21 [Witness excused]

22 **MR. DONG:** Edward Pickering, Larry Wheeler,
23 Matthew Detmer, Brian Yore, Joanne Anderson.

24 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Come on forward.

25 [Witness affirmed]

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1 THEREUPON came,

2 M A T T H E W D E T M E R ,

3 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

4 WITNESS: Matthew Detmer, Fountain Inn.

5 I've sat here with all these situations here,
6 these people can't afford, you know, to see an
7 increase.

8 I did a little research to try to grasp the
9 ins and outs of Duke Power's expenditures the last
10 couple of years. They seem like they're doing all
11 right. Just looking at our current rate, it looks
12 like we're in the 27th most expensive state for
13 power. With this increase, that would put us at
14 number 13, just behind New York. That doesn't seem
15 reasonable to me. Cost of living here is supposed
16 to be low, you know, in South Carolina.

17 So if you look at some of the money they
18 might've spent the past couple of years, a lot of
19 people get this junk mail. You know, "Here's how
20 you're doing compared to your neighbors. You need
21 to lower your bill this much."

22 First of all, my bill has increased greatly
23 since I got this smart meter. You guys see the
24 underlying trend here? Everybody talking about the
25 smart meter, how their bills have gone up? I mean,

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1 they need to be audited. They demand that we get
2 the smart meter; if we don't, they're going to
3 charge us extra fees. There hasn't been any real
4 disclosure on what the frequency of these smart
5 meters could have – what kind of effect it could
6 have. You know, I've got a smart meter right
7 outside my kid's room. They're talking about some
8 kind of crazy burst of frequency coming out of this
9 meter. I don't even know, you know, how it could
10 be affecting my family's health, to begin with.

11 So they're rolling out these projects to do
12 these smart meters and these regulators during the
13 summer that cut your AC off to save power. They
14 send out these comparative letters every month to
15 see how you're doing compared to other people.
16 They gave away all these CFL light bulbs, shipped
17 those out. They do the home energy inspections –
18 send people out to do that and give away all these
19 free products.

20 The guy before said they're sending out, you
21 know, eight trucks to do a simple lightbulb change.
22 These people had to fix a lightbulb in my property
23 in the backyard. They showed up twice. Didn't
24 call me, nothing, just went in my backyard without
25 my permission. You know, there's definitely

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1 disorganization in this organization.

2 So with all these little things they're doing,
3 you know, with the smart meter, the regulator, all
4 the papers they're sending out, the monthly bills,
5 they could be wasting anywhere between \$600 million
6 to \$2.3 billion just on these wasteful actions.

7 They need to be audited. You know, they're
8 contracted to Pike and – I can't recall the other
9 one. But they need to audit those relationships,
10 too. You know, who's benefiting from that? How
11 are they paid? Who's in their pockets? These
12 people are supposed to give us a service, and they
13 should be accountable when they're making – what
14 was it, \$3 billion profit last year? Their top
15 nine executives make \$40 million dollars, combined?
16 You know, South Carolina and Carolinas is their
17 biggest customer, 92 billion gigawatt-hours.

18 [3-minute alarm]

19 So we shouldn't have to pay more than other
20 states, especially when the cost of living here is
21 supposed to be low.

22 I've just got a couple of other points if
23 you'll give me a second to find them here
24 [indicating].

25 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Okay, we'll –

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1 **WITNESS:** Here we go, this is it.

2 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you.

3 **WITNESS:** The – you know, this rate increase
4 is kind of ridiculous, because they haven't been
5 audited on the smart meters. That needs to be
6 addressed immediately. But you know they announced
7 a bid on the Santee Cooper plant, so is this not
8 just a power grab for them to get more money so
9 they can take over this failed property? You know,
10 these people are just making too much money. It's
11 no reason for good folks who are struggling to pay
12 their bill already to have to –

13 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you, Mr. Detmer.

14 **WITNESS:** – take on more debt. Thank you.

15 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Any questions of Mr.
16 Detmer?

17 [No response]

18 Thank you.

19 [Applause]

20 [Witness excused]

21 [Witness affirmed]

22 THEREUPON came,

23 **B R I A N Y O R E ,**

24 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

25 **WITNESS:** Brian Yore, 97 Laurel Ridge,

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1 Greenville, South Carolina 29609.

2 I appreciate the Commission, this late in the
3 evening. I'll try and be brief.

4 I believe the task before you is fairly
5 simple, but not easy. Your decision is going to be
6 based on two things: who you believe and what your
7 values are.

8 The number of analyses you're going to get
9 from Duke representatives, it will be mind-numbing,
10 and they're gonna be pretty slick and they're gonna
11 to persuasive. But I think you have to examine
12 your basic values and they should be more decisive.

13 You are the Public Service Commission, and
14 your existence is to serve the public. If you
15 favor this increase, you value the interests of big
16 business monopolies, which are already paying
17 exorbitant salaries, making billions in profits,
18 and providing already excessive return on
19 investment.

20 Does Duke really need more than it already
21 has? Isn't the disparity between the haves and the
22 have-nots already embarrassing for all of us? Do
23 we wait for the pitchforks to come, before we call
24 a halt to this disparity and craziness?

25 How many houses does one family need? How

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1 many suits can one man wear? How many fees does
2 Duke need to triple?

3 The FAA had the courage, finally, to displease
4 a big business and ground a lot of planes
5 yesterday. Why? For the public good. I ask the
6 Commissioners to value the public welfare in a
7 similar way, and vote no for this proposed rate
8 hike. Are you worthy of your seat on the
9 Commission if your basic values allow for something
10 else?

11 **VOICE:** Amen.

12 **WITNESS:** Thank you.

13 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you, Mr. Yore.

14 Any questions?

15 **VICE CHAIRMAN WILLIAMS:** One question, Mr.
16 Chairman.

17 **EXAMINATION**

18 **BY VICE CHAIRMAN WILLIAMS:**

19 **Q** Sir, what's your background?

20 **A** I'm a licensed psychologist.

21 [Applause]

22 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you. Thank you, sir.

23 **COMMISSIONER ERVIN:** Hey, if you're taking new
24 patients, I'll –

25 **WITNESS:** Yes, sir.

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1 **COMMISSIONER ERVIN:** Are you taking new
2 patients? I –

3 [Laughter]

4 I'm just kidding.

5 **WITNESS:** I'll make time for all of them.

6 **COMMISSIONER ERVIN:** All right. It's been a
7 tough week for us.

8 **WITNESS:** It has.

9 **COMMISSIONER ERVIN:** I appreciate you coming.

10 **WITNESS:** I appreciate what you do.

11 **COMMISSIONER ERVIN:** Thank you, sir.

12 [Witness excused]

13 [Witness affirmed]

14 THEREUPON came,

15 **J O A N N E A R M S T R O N G ,**

16 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

17 **WITNESS:** Commission members, I think we've
18 got about 10 o'clock, now, don't we, so – yeah,
19 it's 10.

20 I'm Joanne Armstrong, 214 Roper Mountain Road,
21 Greenville.

22 And I actually did a lot of research to
23 prepare for this. I agree with what a lot of
24 people have said, and also appreciate everybody
25 that's still here at 10 o'clock. You know,

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1 obviously, there's a lot of folks that care about
2 this. Definitely, auditing the smart meters,
3 because I think Duke Energy's already gotten their
4 rate increase, and then a lot more, from –

5 **VOICE:** Amen.

6 **WITNESS:** – these malfunctioning smart meters.
7 Okay.

8 I'm a provider of affordable housing. And so
9 I have a lot of these smart meters and thousands of
10 dollars of Duke Energy bills to pay. So, yes, they
11 definitely need to be audited.

12 As far as my being an affordable housing
13 provider, we – we have many, many, many applicants
14 for our homes, and so many people don't qualify
15 because Duke Energy has thrown them away as
16 customers. One of our criteria to be able to rent
17 one of our homes is that you have an account with
18 Duke Energy and it's in good standing. Okay?
19 There are thousands of people who have no account
20 with Duke Energy, so everybody – for everybody that
21 was here that is just getting by, there are
22 thousands and thousands of other people who can't
23 get an account, you know, because they defaulted
24 some time ago.

25 So, our – we actually have vacancies up now

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1 because of that. The economy is starting to turn
2 around. Our rents are going down. And to continue
3 with our criteria of having an active Duke Energy
4 account, it's – people are in short supply that
5 have one anymore, for affordable housing units.

6 So I do want to tell you that the damage is
7 already being done. And what I would like to ask
8 Duke Energy is, how many thousands of customers,
9 tens of thousands, have you thrown away, you know,
10 who used to have accounts and can't get them
11 anymore? Because it's a huge number.

12 I researched and I found a really excellent
13 study on WalletHub which compares the utility rates
14 of all 50 states. And from their research, which
15 they explained their methodology, South Carolina is
16 number one most expensive electricity provider of
17 the 50 states, right now. The most expensive. So
18 I would really urge you to take a look at that.
19 It's actually a great study.

20 Then I went to the –

21 [3-minute alarm]

22 – Census Bureau and I looked up what the per
23 capita household income is for the 50 states? We
24 are number 42 in income. So we're down near the
25 bottom.

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1 So when I took the difference between the
2 monthly electricity rate from the number 42 state,
3 which is Montana, and I calculated that, that would
4 mean Duke Energy would need to decrease our rates
5 by 40 percent to be equivalent, you know, for our
6 42nd place in line as far as our incomes. That's
7 how much they would have to reduce. So –

8 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you, Ms. Armstrong.

9 **WITNESS:** – this is serious.

10 **EXAMINATION**

11 **BY COMMISSIONER ERVIN:**

12 **Q** I have a question for you, if you don't mind. Is there
13 any way for someone to rehabilitate their credit in the
14 eyes of Duke Energy, once they have been delinquent or
15 had service terminated? Is there any mechanism for
16 that, do you know?

17 **A** I – no, they pretty much throw them out. So they can't
18 have a household. They have to have electricity in
19 someone else's name.

20 And we had a person who was stealing electricity,
21 so they blackballed that whole house that we owned and
22 said no one can live there, you know, because this
23 person was stealing – it's a bad house, in other words.
24 So their rules are really quirky.

25 **COMMISSIONER ERVIN:** I'd like for ORS to look

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1 into that. Is that – there ought to be a mechanism
2 where someone who maybe lost a job or became
3 temporarily disabled can rehabilitate their credit.

4 **WITNESS:** That would be excellent.

5 **COMMISSIONER ERVIN:** So, I'd like to look into
6 that. And, you know, since they're a monopoly,
7 they really can't pick and choose their customers
8 that way, without some fair process to have, you
9 know, someone rehabilitate themselves creditwise
10 and get back in the service.

11 **WITNESS:** I totally agree.

12 **COMMISSIONER ERVIN:** We'll look into that.

13 **BY COMMISSIONER ERVIN:**

14 **Q** And what housing – do you work with the Greenville
15 Housing Authority?

16 **A** No, we have our own company, which is called God's
17 Country Real Estate. So, we've been a provider for a
18 while –

19 **Q** You're a provider, right.

20 **A** – so we see all of this. The other thing that we have
21 noticed is, like the other gentleman said, Duke Energy
22 will respond to calls where power is out, and they will
23 not respond to calls where a streetlight is out or a
24 security light is out. And that is crucial in the
25 neighborhoods that we're in, that –

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1 **Q** Right.

2 **A** – those be operating, and –

3 **Q** We'll look into that –

4 **A** – they will not do it.

5 **Q** We'll look into that, as well.

6 **A** Okay.

7 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you, ma'am.

8 **WITNESS:** Thank you, very much.

9 [Witness excused]

10 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Next witness, please.

11 **MR. DONG:** Toshia Reggie Campbell, Tamarra
12 Anderson, Ben Hallissy, Matthew Grant, Clarence
13 Thornton, Bodil Brooks, Wames Thompson.

14 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Step right on up.

15 [Witness affirmed]

16 THEREUPON came,

17 **T O S H I A C L A R K ,**

18 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

19 **WITNESS:** My name is Toshia Clark, and I'm
20 here on behalf of Reggie Campbell. The lights is
21 in his name. So, we share a trailer.

22 So, first of all, give it unto God to be here
23 tonight. I would like to tell you that I didn't
24 have understanding – I stayed on – I'm from
25 Greenville, South Carolina 29611. I stayed on

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1 Anderson – 2005 Anderson Road. The rent there was
2 like \$850, and that was just – we had gas heat. So
3 then I, you know, stayed there two years, and I
4 couldn't afford it anymore. So I was looking for
5 something with more heating assistance, heat and
6 air, and I went down to 6 Security Drive, in
7 Greenville, South Carolina 29611. It's a mobile
8 home park.

9 I only been in there about four months now. I
10 didn't have heat for two months. I took and I got
11 sick with the flu, and I didn't have heat. So the
12 first time I moved in I had heat and air, but then
13 I notice, you know – I'm not an electrician, but
14 inside of my home, the power box had been like – I
15 don't know how to say, but stuff taken out, and I
16 didn't understand, because now I haven't had heat
17 or anything for two months.

18 So I've got some pictures. I'm just not
19 understanding, you know, about what's going on. I
20 see all this in the power – I mean, in the fuse box
21 inside, but I know it's not supposed to be this
22 way. So I am here for help –

23 **COMMISSIONER ERVIN:** Can you talk with the
24 Duke representative tonight?

25 **WITNESS:** – if somebody can help me, because

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1 this this is a whole block –

2 **COMMISSIONER ERVIN:** All right. Sit over here
3 with his gentleman in the white shirt and see if he
4 can help you.

5 **WITNESS:** Okay, thank you, sir, because I
6 don't understand, and somebody's taking my power.
7 And the bill was like \$475. It's a lot.

8 [Witness excused]

9 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Next witness, please.

10 [Witness affirmed]

11 THEREUPON came,

12 **T A M A R R A A N D E R S O N ,**
13 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

14 **WITNESS:** My name is Tamarra Anderson. And I
15 don't want to give my address. I'm single.

16 So I didn't have anything prepared to say, so
17 I've learned a lot listening to the audience,
18 listening to your feedback about the questions.
19 But I am a single mom. My youngest is 20, and he
20 just flew the nest. And I was so excited about
21 being able to do things that I wasn't able to
22 accomplish when I had my kids – when I was
23 responsible for my kids, like pay bills on time.
24 Now I'm back in place where I'm going to have to
25 decide am I going to be able to afford medicine,

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1 which I need now, or, you know, paying the light
2 bill. And it's a real struggle. And I don't even
3 own a home yet. And so, some other people
4 mentioned how they have homes with all of these
5 nice appliances. I haven't even got there yet. My
6 nest was empty and now I have an opportunity to do
7 what I need to do. I don't want to beg for
8 assistance. I don't need it. I was capable when I
9 had my children. I'm still capable.

10 Everybody's talking about the \$21 million that
11 the CEO is making. [Indicating] that's great. I'm
12 all for women's empowerment, and I think that's
13 wonderful. Maybe she can teach us how to do that,
14 how to make that much money. Because who needs
15 that much money? Like, what are you gonna do?
16 Somebody mentioned buy two more yachts. Okay, I
17 would just like to buy my own garage with my own
18 house, you know? That kind of thing.

19 So, yeah, I didn't have anything prepared to
20 say, so I hope you just understand how I feel with
21 this light bill increase. You guys need to say no
22 because it takes away my opportunity to stand on my
23 feet and not have to have any kind of assistance,
24 you know. And I'm not knocking anybody who does
25 need assistance. With this increase, a lot more

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1 people are going to need it. So thank you for
2 listening.

3 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you, Ms. Anderson.

4 Any questions?

5 [No response]

6 Okay.

7 [Witness excused]

8 We're going to need to take a short break and
9 we'll come right back.

10 [WHEREUPON, a recess was taken from 10:24
11 to 10:30 p.m.]

12 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** We'll call back to order.

13 We have someone at the podium ready.

14 [Witness affirmed]

15 THEREUPON came,

16 **M A T T H E W G R A N T ,**

17 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

18 **WITNESS:** If it pleases the Commission, I work
19 in the power industry, so I can quickly explain the
20 smart meters.

21 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Give us your name and
22 address, too.

23 **WITNESS:** Yeah, my name is Matthew Grant. I
24 live in Greenville, 29607, Hollingsworth Park
25 subdivision.

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1 If you will just give me a few seconds, I can
2 explain the smart meters before I go into my stats.
3 So, the smart meters are basically – the regular
4 meters are analog meters, so they work kind of like
5 an old watch. If you think of it, an old watch is
6 mechanical. Sometimes it loses time and you have
7 to wind it. The smart meter, you don't – or, the
8 older meter, you don't really go touch it, so over
9 time it may not count as well. With digital
10 meters, they're kind of like your Fitbit.
11 Electronics go high, so sometimes when they fail
12 and start counting high, and it's why these
13 ridiculous bills of \$800. They really need to be
14 regulated.

15 I would propose to the Commission that, just
16 like when you go buy gas, there's a sticker right
17 on there that says, "We certify that you got one
18 gallon directly out of this pump"? I suggest the
19 same sticker on the smart meters, to make sure that
20 the voltage is verified, that it's counting
21 correctly.

22 Going forward, I am a solar user. I got a
23 system two years ago, just the last two years ago.
24 Before I got the system, my rate was about 11 cents
25 per kilowatt. Duke's buyback for my overproduction

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1 is at 5 cents per kilowatt. So on a 1000 kilowatt
2 bill, basically Duke is making \$60 a month on every
3 single solar user that's overproducing, off the
4 top. Don't have to do anything.

5 If I were to turn myself into an LLC, like
6 Warren's Electric, they would have to pay me at
7 market rate, which means they would have to buy it
8 back from me at 11 cents, since they're selling it
9 at 11 cents to every single customer. So that's
10 another thing to look into.

11 Overall, if you want to say economics of the
12 State, well, both in North Carolina, Progress
13 Energy, and here in South Carolina, there's two
14 major utility producers of heavy equipment for
15 power plants that have major plants. I believe the
16 new productions for, specifically, Dan River, which
17 is a site in [name inaudible], was the last one where
18 either one of those facilities, manufacturing
19 facilities, have produced any plants or any
20 equipment for Duke Power. It's all, I believe,
21 from Siemens on the last ones they made, especially
22 at the W.S. Lee power plant, which is the one where
23 they're looking into the coal ash right now. So if
24 you want to say, hey, trying to keep jobs in the
25 State, well, the one in Charlotte and the one here

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1 in Greenville, they're not producing the turbines
2 to go run those plants, so that's jobs. So if it
3 comes down to economics, that's one thing. And the
4 last comment here is, right now, there's a public
5 notice on DHEC, 19-00-9M, where the W.S. Lee plant
6 is asking for a less stringent interpretation of
7 the water regulations –

8 [3-minute alarm]

9 – so that they can distribute the wastewater
10 at a higher temperature, so 95 degrees, to the
11 river.

12 Why do you need that, if you're saying your
13 facility fee needs to go up to cover your costs?
14 To me that just seems like you need to run the
15 plant better, and obviously the other downstream
16 effects of that water runoff at higher degrees into
17 the river.

18 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you, sir. Any
19 questions for Mr. Grant?

20 **VICE CHAIRMAN WILLIAMS:** Quick question, Mr.
21 Chairman.

22 **EXAMINATION**

23 **BY VICE CHAIRMAN WILLIAMS:**

24 **Q** You said the smart meters, they're off a bit? Or they
25 need to be calibrated? Could you sort of explain that

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1 to me a little bit?

2 **A** They're all digital, so just like a Fitbit or Apple
3 watch, over time they may degrade, they may fail. Some
4 instrument that may fail may fail high. So over time
5 you need to go back and check, to make sure it's still
6 measuring correctly.

7 **Q** How would you do that?

8 **A** You'd have to take off the meter and inspect it. Just
9 like, right now, if you're saying you're going out there
10 and physically replacing these analog meters to digital
11 ones, that's essentially what you're doing. Instead of
12 going out there and inspecting and then saying, "Hey, is
13 this analog one counting correctly," you're putting a
14 smart one on here, one which gives you added security
15 because you know if someone tried to tamper with it,
16 they would know right away and be able to cut that off
17 and/or replace it with a newer one if it fails. So, the
18 difference that people may be seeing is the fact that,
19 right now, their – or, in their analog one, they may be
20 using the same amount of power, but it may not be
21 counting correctly. But now that they have the digital
22 one that's counting correctly, it's making up for any
23 losses in that mechanical system, and they're seeing a
24 higher bill. Or it could be as, in some cases, maybe
25 the meter did fail.

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1 **Q** Thank you.

2 **A** You don't know that, though, without inspecting it, how
3 much depends on the equipment in there, which comes from
4 any amount of suppliers around the world.

5 [Applause]

6 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you, Mr. Grant.

7 [Witness excused]

8 [Witness affirmed]

9 THEREUPON came,

10 **C L A R E N C E T H O R N T O N ,**
11 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

12 **WITNESS:** My name is Clarence Thornton. I
13 reside at 114 Douthit Street.

14 I know it's been a long evening for everyone
15 here, but I want people to be fiscally responsible
16 for their actions. If you want change, you have to
17 vote change. If you want to get – we get what we
18 pay for. Everybody have to pay for their
19 investments.

20 We talk about make America great. How can you
21 make America great with this price raise? We talk
22 about helping the people. This right here will do
23 nothing but hurt people.

24 We talk about loving one another and being
25 fellow Americans. How can we feel good about

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1 watching our fellow Americans hurt so much? Martin
2 Luther King said injustice anywhere affects justice
3 everywhere. When the people get this increase,
4 they don't have it, because their earnings don't
5 increase. David said "Why should I drink when so
6 many thirst?" Why should Duke Energy get an
7 increase when so many suffering?

8 We're all Americans. Where are our
9 compassion?

10 I ask the question, how do these people better
11 from this? Will this rate increase make their
12 lives better or will this increase hurt them? It
13 robs from the poor and it gives to the rich.

14 Duke shall pay for their [word inaudible]. They
15 invested our money the wrong way. They bought
16 companies that they couldn't afford. They bought
17 Progressive[sic] Energy with \$13.9 billion. They
18 bought Piedmont Natural Gas for \$4.9 billion in
19 October 2016. They squandered \$147 million on a
20 power plant they did not even know how to use.

21 What would Jesus do? This is inhumane. It's
22 inhumane for fellow Americans. Why we letting Duke
23 Energy prosper when so many are hurting? I find it
24 criminal.

25 I also want to say that they got their

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1 increase. Anytime a poor person have to pay a \$800
2 dollar bill, you got your increase. Anytime a poor
3 person have to worry about "Can I pay my bills,"
4 you got your increase. We didn't ask for a smart
5 meter; you got your increase.

6 And I'm also kind of saddened by the show.
7 They have to come here to get their bill reduced.
8 Why they couldn't get it reduced over the
9 telephone? They have to come here to get help.
10 Why they couldn't get the help over the telephone?

11 So I believe this Commission will do the right
12 thing. They don't need an increase. You wouldn't
13 give me a billion dollars and I go squander it in
14 Las Vegas and then say, "Hey, let me pay for it.
15 Let us all pay for it."

16 [3-minute alarm]

17 Be responsible for your actions. Let them be
18 responsible for their actions and investment. And
19 I pray to God that this Commission do the right
20 thing.

21 God bless you. I know it's been a long day.
22 Peace be with you in the name of Jesus.

23 [Applause]

24 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you, Mr. Thornton.

25 Any questions for Mr. Thornton?

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1 [No response]

2 [Witness excused]

3 Okay. Next witness.

4 **MR. DONG:** Eriean Nichole, Sylvia Aiken, Elly
5 Woman, Adrienne Fowler, Robert Janvrin, Godwin
6 Clement, Karene Debaty.

7 Want me to stop?

8 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** You got two?

9 **MR. DONG:** Got two.

10 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Yeah, go ahead.

11 [Witness affirmed]

12 THEREUPON came,

13 **E L L Y W O M A N ,**

14 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

15 **WITNESS:** My name is Elly Woman. And that is
16 my legal last name, because I'm just a singer in a
17 rock 'n roll band. But anyway, I don't want to
18 give my address because I'm by myself, so – I'm in
19 Taylors, South Carolina.

20 I've done so much, but I've never been to
21 anything like this before. And I just felt very
22 strong that I need to be here. And the thing is
23 that it's really hard when you live in a 1965
24 trailer, 10-by-50 feet, and you only get \$791
25 Social Security, with your SSI included. That's

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1 what I live on. My brother lives on the same.
2 Because I had jobs like working in stores and
3 domestic work, so you don't get a big retirement.
4 You live on \$791. And it went up with the 2.6
5 percent increase, or less than that. But then they
6 took \$16 out of my food stamps, which was – it's
7 down to \$47 a month now.

8 So, you know, I can't take up any more
9 [indicating]. I mean, where am I going to go? I
10 mean, I have to pay my car payment or I can't get
11 to the store and get groceries. And I live in a
12 trailer park where I pay, you know, the lot rent.
13 But I still have to live. I mean, I don't go to
14 the mall. I don't – nothing is frivolous. People
15 give me stuff. They give me – even food, I go to
16 food banks or I go to the zero mart, you know, to
17 try to get things for like a dollar, old food and
18 stuff, but it works. I mean, I don't usually get
19 sick.

20 I'm very blessed with good health, but I'm
21 seeing this struggle, and when they put that smart
22 meter in, I didn't want him to put that smart meter
23 in. I said "No, I don't want that." He said, "You
24 have to have it unless you pay \$150." And I said,
25 "Why? My meter works fine. I don't have any

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1 problems with it. Why should I have to pay for a
2 smart meter?" I mean, why should I have to have
3 that installed? And he said, "Well, you'll pay
4 \$150 a month – flat rate, and then it's \$11-
5 something a month for them to read your meters."
6 Well, I haven't seen anybody in my yard in years,
7 reading my meter. Not in years. So how were they
8 reading it years ago before the smart meter? Hmm.
9 Like, they don't really need to do this. What's –
10 this is like a – I think it's being forced on the
11 human race, it seems like. Everyone is gonna
12 probably have to have it around the world. There's
13 something up. I don't have all the answers, but
14 it's scary to me. It's all –

15 [3-minute alarm]

16 – scary to me. I don't know where it's going
17 to go, and as the bills increase, how are we going
18 to pay them? You know, you can get assistance a
19 couple of times a year. That's all they allow you,
20 is two times a year. So what about the rest of the
21 months?

22 So I just pray you all make the right
23 decision, because there's somebody watching this
24 higher than all of us –

25 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you.

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1 **WITNESS:** – who takes account of it. So, I
2 pray you'll be blessed.

3 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you, ma'am.

4 Any questions?

5 [No response]

6 Okay. Thank you.

7 [Witness excused]

8 [Witness affirmed]

9 THEREUPON came,

10 **K A R I N E D E B A T Y ,**

11 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

12 **WITNESS:** Good evening. I'm Karine Debaty. I
13 have a very Eastern accent, so that may wake you up
14 a little bit. And I live in Greer, 107 Sugar Field
15 Court.

16 I came with an agenda, and I'm going to talk
17 about what I've heard more. I'm kind of --

18 **COMMISSIONER ERVIN:** Could you speak into the
19 mic, please?

20 **WITNESS:** I'm kind of very sad and upset for
21 what I've heard. So I think today we have a lot of
22 ethical issues, and I'm going to list them. The
23 fact that low incomes and everybody has to pay the
24 same fee, meaning paying for the one who has a
25 pool, paying for the one who has a 5000-square-foot

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1 house, it's not ethical.

2 The fact that, indirectly, Duke Energy is
3 trying to make us pay for nuclear power that maybe
4 we, the customer, don't want, it's not ethical.
5 It's kind of behind the scene [indicating].

6 The fact that South Carolina allows one
7 company to be the monopoly of such an important
8 thing as energy, which we warm the milk for baby,
9 is not ethical.

10 The fact that Duke Energy – what they are
11 doing right now is actually trying to break the
12 progress towards green energy while, at the same
13 time, South Carolina is trying to go towards green
14 energy. This is not ethical for future generations
15 and also for the business of South Carolina.

16 And then I heard today a lot of things about
17 managing their business. And I'm a financial
18 auditor, and I'm also an engineer, and I've done
19 audits, as well. I've made my assessment. I'm
20 very worried and I think, before we say anything to
21 Duke Energy, we should have them have a financial
22 audit and an operational audit. Everything I heard
23 today went to that there is something wrong with
24 the way they manage their business, and we are
25 paying for it. That cannot be possible. I'm done.

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[Applause]

CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, ma'am.

Any questions?

COMMISSIONER ERVIN: Mr. Chairman?

CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Yes.

EXAMINATION

BY COMMISSIONER ERVIN:

Q I'm familiar, of course, with financial audits. I'm not so familiar with operational audits. Who's qualified to do a, quote, "operational audit" on a large corporation like that?

A You usually hire an external consultant, like Deloitte & Touche Petrol, a big company, and I've done a lot of those.

It is apparent that their processes are broken.

Q Right.

A We mentioned customer service, we mentioned the operational issues.

Q So, how long would it take for an independent provider to do an operational audit and make recommendations?

A I would say one year, at least.

Q One year.

A Yeah, because Duke Energy is large and because, apparently, from what I'm hearing, they are broken everywhere. So, and that company has to be very

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1 independent.

2 **COMMISSIONER ERVIN:** That's a great idea, and
3 I wonder if ORS would look into our authority, in
4 terms – or, your authority in terms of requiring an
5 operational audit, because it does sound like a lot
6 of things are broken.

7 **WITNESS:** Yeah.

8 **BY COMMISSIONER ERVIN:**

9 **Q** They're not functioning well together.

10 **A** And we are paying for it.

11 **Q** You're paying for it.

12 **A** Like with all those 20,000 trucks coming from one site.

13 **Q** So there's an efficiency – if we can get them to
14 communicate better internally, we can all save money.

15 **A** Uh-huh.

16 **Q** And they can save time, and be more productive.

17 **A** But I would also highly recommend financial audits.
18 What I'm hearing, the fact that this here was such an
19 increase. I'd prefer audits – I mean, I'm not saying
20 they are not ethical, but something is wrong with the
21 way they manage their money.

22 **Q** Thank you for coming tonight.

23 **A** Thank you for having me.

24 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you, ma'am.

25 [Witness excused]

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1 Next witness.

2 MR. DONG: Okay. I have six names left on the
3 list, so I'm going to just go through them all.
4 Wyman Schultz, Cathy James, Karen Callis, Sarah
5 Bechtold, Melody Henson, and Shnetha Dickerson.

6 [Witness affirmed]

7 THEREUPON came,

8 S A R A H B E C H T O L D ,

9 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

10 WITNESS: My name is Sarah Bechtold, and if I
11 give my address my mom would kill me, so – I live
12 in Piedmont.

13 I know we've been here a long time, so I'll be
14 really brief. I'm going to be graduating from
15 college in December, and I may not be a bill payer
16 right now, but I will be one day. And if I decide
17 to stay in South Carolina, I'm going to be paying
18 Duke Energy one day. And a lot of people that I
19 love are paying to Duke Energy right now.

20 And becoming a social worker one day, like I
21 want to be, I've already been told a lot about how
22 my life is gonna suck one day, just because of the
23 nature of the job and because of how the earth is
24 being run into the ground. And so, hearing a lot
25 about this tonight just really makes me worry that

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1 my life is going to suck one day, if I have to
2 worry about stuff like this coming at me on a daily
3 basis.

4 So I'm not going to pretend like I know a lot
5 of stuff. I don't know much about power, I don't
6 know much about paying bills. I go to school. I
7 do my best. And one day I'm gonna re-put that into
8 my community, and I'm not going to make a lot doing
9 it. And if I'm going to have to be paying a lot of
10 money, like I've heard so many of these other
11 people tonight having to pay, I'm not going to be
12 able to survive.

13 So that's all I have to say is that, on behalf
14 of me and all the other communities and people that
15 are not being heard, and for all the students out
16 there one day who are going to have to be the bill
17 payers, please consider doing what's best for us.

18 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you, ma'am.

19 Any questions?

20 [No response]

21 Thank you.

22 [Witness excused]

23 [Witness affirmed]

24 <

25 <

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1 THEREUPON came,

2 S H N E T H A D I C K E R S O N ,

3 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

4 WITNESS: My name is Shnetha Dickerson, and
5 I'm from Chester, South Carolina 29706.

6 I have been having an issue with Duke Power
7 off and on for probably about, say, seven years.
8 At first when we built our home, I was so excited
9 to have Duke Power because of all the other
10 electric companies around in the other area,
11 tri-city or -county area, Rock Hill, South
12 Carolina, Fort Mill, so – four like that. I think
13 it's City of Rock Hill, and I cannot think of the
14 other electric company at this time.

15 But I was excited. But, then I noticed that
16 no one was coming down, out of 40 acres, to read
17 our meter. We're on a dead-end road. No one. We
18 occupy three acres of that. We have two security
19 lights. And at this time, one day I was opening my
20 utility bill and I did say some bad words to my
21 husband because I asked him what in the – do you
22 have plugged up out there? This bill was \$1000-
23 and-something.

24 Okay. So we leave our home in the morning at
25 – he leaves around 6 o'clock, I leave around 7.

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1 Okay. We don't come back home till about 7.

2 There's no reason for our bills to ever be this
3 high. So, at this point in time, I went to work
4 the next day. I called customer service. I'm so
5 upset with the people that I talked to on the
6 phone, and I had to hang up and regroup. It took
7 me out of my character. Okay. This time I called
8 back, I talked to someone, and I explained to them
9 what my bill is like, and what that lady said to me
10 – because she told me I was gonna have to pay it,
11 and evidently something was wrong in my home. And
12 I said, "Ma'am, no, it's not. Our home was built,
13 brick. It's 2300 square feet." I said, "And
14 everything in here is energy efficient. There's no
15 reason for my utility bill to be this high."

16 So at this time, that second lady did get me
17 to a manager. I talked to the manager, and no one
18 but the manager at that time – the second lady did
19 tell me, she said, "You know, I don't know what we
20 gonna do about it, but I can get you someone who
21 can." The gentleman got on the phone and, come to
22 find out that this meter I had on my house had
23 exploded. They would have known that, if they
24 would have came down and viewed my – to read my
25 meter or whatever, but they told me there was no

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1 reason for them to.

2 So, with this smart meter going on my house,
3 my utility bills range from \$450 every month.
4 Every month. When we first got it – I would say,
5 when we first built the house, our bill was like
6 \$200-and-something. Our bill has increased and
7 continue to increase. I just paid an \$800-and-
8 something light bill last month. And now I got
9 another one.

10 And I called and I asked them about it, about
11 this bill, and they said that that was right. I
12 said, “This cannot be right. There’s no reason.
13 This house is energy efficient. It’s brick.”

14 [3-minute alarm]

15 I shouldn’t have to worry about paying bills
16 like that.

17 **COMMISSIONER WHITFIELD:** Mr. Chairman.

18 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Yes.

19 **COMMISSIONER WHITFIELD:** Mr. Chairman, if I
20 could.

21 **EXAMINATION**

22 **BY COMMISSIONER WHITFIELD:**

23 **Q** Ms. Dickerson, you’re from Chester. You came a long
24 way.

25 **A** I came all the way, because there’s – I don’t know why

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1 nothing is being held like this in our area. We use
2 Duke Power.

3 Q Well, I'm from Winnsboro, and I applaud you for coming
4 all the way from Chester. But I want to ask you one
5 question, and then offer something. Did you say your
6 address?

7 A No, I didn't.

8 Q You said you were down a road?

9 A I'm on a dead-end road. And that's the other problem.
10 Like that gentleman –

11 Q What is your address, if you don't mind us asking?

12 A Can I give it to you –

13 Q Oh, it's on the sheet.

14 A It's on the sheet. But –

15 Q Okay.

16 A – the guy says that that paperwork that comes out to
17 tell you what you're doing, with other houses around
18 you, okay, every month I get this telling me, and I'm
19 always spiked up here [indicating]. Why? No one is
20 around us. And you are evaluating my area with nothing
21 around me, and you've got to drive up the road and back
22 some more before you see anybody to even give me an
23 average bill. My bill shouldn't be that high. I'm in
24 the country. I'm on a dead-end road. We entertain
25 ourselves. You know, we're up with the chickens and

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1 down with the chickens. There's no way. My husband go
2 to bed every night at 9:30, and I'm usually in the bed
3 by 10, and my children are, too – and there's only two
4 in the home now. We had six, but we're down to four,
5 and that's my two twins – the twins that we have – and
6 me and my husband. So there is no reason for our bill
7 to be \$400-and-something every month. And my house,
8 we've only lived in our house 14 years. And sometimes
9 it's higher than that.

10 **Q** Well, Ms. Dickerson, thank you for your testimony. I
11 would certainly encourage you to reach out to Mr.
12 Nelson, sitting there, with the South Carolina State
13 Office of Regulatory Staff. They can talk directly to
14 the utility for you, whereas we can't. So you've got an
15 opportunity to work with ORS tonight.

16 **A** And they put that smart meter out there, and I don't
17 care for it either, because it – that's what was on my
18 house prior to, I'm assuming, if it exploded. And they
19 were not coming down to read my meter.

20 **Q** Well, I would share that complaint and concern with ORS.

21 **A** [Indicating.]

22 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you.

23 [Witness excused]

24 Next witness.

25 [Witness affirmed]

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1 THEREUPON came,

2 C A T H Y J A M E S ,

3 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

4 WITNESS: My name is Cathy James. I hope
5 everybody's doing good.

6 Now the thing is, what I got is a big tree
7 where I'm at and –

8 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Pull that microphone down a
9 little bit so –

10 WITNESS: [Indicating.] Yeah. When it rains,
11 the sparks come out of it. I'm the original owner
12 of the house; been there since 2005. Not one
13 person wants to come and cut the tree and do all
14 the transistor and everything and all that, and
15 it's on Picket Road, in Taylors.

16 And it's dangerous, because we've always got
17 dead squirrels on the ground and everything. And I
18 think it's the reason why the bill is so high. I
19 mean, something is not right that when it's raining
20 the sparks are going. Even in the winter.

21 And I'm there. I watched for over 10 years my
22 bill be normal, \$50 a month, when I started, and
23 then the smart meter came in and I got \$1005. It's
24 only a 600-square-foot home. And everything is
25 insulated. Everything's – every time I call

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1 customer service, different people, but they say,
2 "You're energy efficient. It costs more money."
3 How is that possible, you know?

4 And Duke Power – \$21 million, that's nice, but
5 you know what? I need a break. I've got to live
6 on \$600 income a month, and I got paperwork here to
7 show it. How am I going to pay \$1005? SHARE only
8 twice can pay.

9 **VOICE:** Right.

10 **WITNESS:** United Ministry only give you \$75.
11 How I get money to pay this bill? I gotta rob
12 bank? What the heck I gotta do? I'm frustrated.
13 I had a stroke. They turned off my power. Almost
14 one year. I had a stroke from it. How I got to
15 do this? I can't – you make over – \$200, and they
16 don't give you crap. You guys need to know what
17 it's like. Get a book on it: How to be poor
18 instead of being so goddamn rich, the way you are.

19 Do your job. I qualify.

20 **COMMISSIONER ERVIN:** I know you're frustrated,
21 I'm glad you brought your –

22 **WITNESS:** Yes.

23 **COMMISSIONER ERVIN:** – bills.

24 **WITNESS:** I had a stroke because of these
25 people, and you want to give them the raises. You

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1 increase them, I curse you all to suffer the
2 poverty I suffer, end of story. And I trust that
3 in Jesus' name. [Indicating.]

4 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you, ma'am.

5 **WITNESS:** And make sure that no kids get
6 electrocuted by Duke Power that's in the tree – I
7 keep telling them for like 12 years to cut the tree
8 down.

9 How I pay \$1005? Everybody give me donation
10 now. What, I have to go to Walmart and beg for
11 money?

12 **DEPUTY SHERIFF:** Ma'am, you need to leave.

13 **WITNESS:** They need to not give raise.

14 **DEPUTY SHERIFF:** You had your say.

15 **WITNESS:** It's a –

16 **DEPUTY SHERIFF:** You had your say. You had
17 your say.

18 **WITNESS:** Forget it, okay? You pay my bill,
19 \$1005.

20 [Witness excused]

21 **MS. SMITH:** Mr. Chairman? Mr. Chairman?
22 There is a safety issue raised. And if we could
23 please – maybe Mr. Preston could have that
24 addressed, just to – if there's a safety issue on
25 Picket Road, I think we really care to look into

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1 that.

2 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Okay.

3 **MS. SMITH:** I don't want to disclose her
4 address publicly, but we'd like to have that at the
5 close of the hearing. Thank you.

6 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** We'll get that to Mr.
7 Preston. Thank you

8 [Witness affirmed]

9 THEREUPON came,

10 **M E L O D Y H E N S O N ,**
11 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

12 **WITNESS:** My name is Melody Henson, and I live
13 at 120 Welcome Avenue, Greenville, South Carolina.

14 And my concern is that this CEO lady, she's
15 gonna get this big huge raise, and they're gonna
16 give her all this money, and then that's gonna
17 affect the customers because it's gonna cause them
18 to have to pay more money, and their rates are
19 going to go up. And who can afford to pay – to go
20 from paying \$8 to \$28 per month, so they can have
21 this raise and pay her more money, when – I live on
22 disability, and there's a lot of other people that
23 do, too, and they just live from month-to-month on
24 this income, and that's all they have. And when
25 you get a raise and then they raise your rates, and

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1 then Duke Energy wants to raise the rates and
2 everything, well, the raise you got on your check –
3 it's totally useless, because you're turning out –
4 your raise that you got is going out to pay this,
5 and what's that leave you with? Because you have
6 nothing to show for getting a raise on your check,
7 because the bill goes up and you've got to end up
8 paying more money to pay this bill.

9 And then, my light bill from them, like I have
10 to pay a past-due amount right now, to keep them
11 from cutting my lights off next Wednesday. And I
12 don't even have this, not to mention the present
13 amount that's gonna be past due, come another month
14 from now. And they want more money. How they
15 expect the poor people who live on fixed income to
16 do this? It's just not fair. And it's not right.

17 And she don't need all this extra money.
18 She's got plenty of money; she's living good, so
19 why not consider the people and the customers who
20 have to struggle every day from month-to-month, who
21 live on monthly income? And it's hard. And they
22 need to put theirselves in the other people's shoes,
23 and realize this, and look at it from the
24 standpoint of the poor people, the ones who live on
25 fixed incomes, struggle from day to day, whether

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1 they're going to pay the bill or try to pay the
2 past-due amount, buy groceries, pay their rent, or
3 whatever, and they have to sacrifice, so they can
4 make this choice of which one they're gonna do.
5 And if they'd go walk a mile in our shoes, they
6 would see it from a different viewpoint.

7 And thank y'all for listening to me and
8 hearing me out, and I pray that y'all vote no and
9 turn down this raise, because they don't need it.
10 They have plenty of money; they can make do on what
11 they have.

12 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you, Ms. Henson.

13 **WITNESS:** And I thank you for listening to me.

14 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you, ma'am.

15 **WITNESS:** And I pray y'all do the right thing.
16 God bless us.

17 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you.

18 Any questions for Ms. Henson?

19 [No response]

20 Thank you.

21 [Witness excused]

22 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Yes, sir.

23 **VOICE:** I just wanted to ask one question, for
24 you.

25 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** We can't answer a question.

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1 You'll need to talk with ORS or – after the
2 hearing.

3 **VOICE:** Well, a general question about
4 monopoly with Duke Power? You know, back in the
5 '70s when I was growing up, they made AT&T and
6 BellSouth split because they had a monopoly. Is
7 that not a law, or is that not – because Duke Power
8 holds the monopoly?

9 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** You'll have to talk with
10 Mr. Nelson about that.

11 **VOICE:** All right. Thank you.

12 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you.

13 **VOICE:** Thank everybody for listening to us
14 tonight.

15 **CHAIRMAN RANDALL:** Thank you, sir.

16 Okay, that's our last person signed up. And
17 we appreciate everybody coming tonight, and we are
18 adjourned.

19 [WHEREUPON, at 11:05 p.m., the hearing in
20 the above-entitled matter was adjourned, to
21 reconvene at 10:00 a.m. on March 21, 2019.]

22 _____
23 [WHEREUPON, Hearing Exhibit No. 8 was
24 marked and received in evidence.]
25 _____

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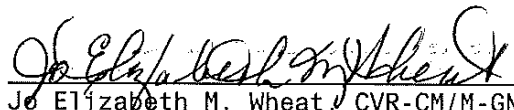
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C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Jo Elizabeth M. Wheat, CVR-CM-GNSC, Notary Public in and for the State of South Carolina, do hereby certify that the foregoing is, to the best of my skill and ability, a true and correct transcript of all the proceedings had and testimony adduced in an evening public hearing held in the above-captioned matter before the PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF SOUTH CAROLINA;

That the witnesses appearing during said hearing were affirmed to state the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth;

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and seal, on this the 8th day of November, 2019.


Jo Elizabeth M. Wheat, CVR-CM/M-GNSC
Hearings Reporter, PSC/SC
My Commission Expires: January 27, 2021.

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